Understanding Advaita Vedanta

Neti-Neti

By Indiaspirituality Blog (Amrut)

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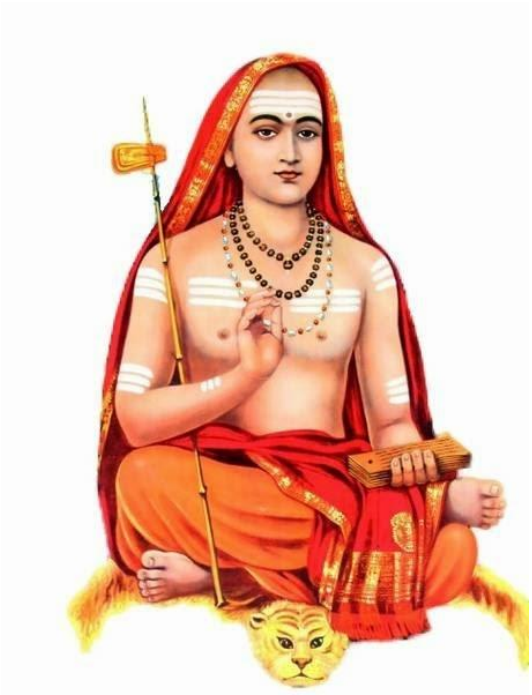
|| ॐ श्री गणेशाय नमः ||

समर्पण - जगद्गुरू श्री आदि संकराचार्य

Jagadguru Sri Adi Sankaracharya, the revivalist of *vedic dharma*



विदिताखिलशास्त्रसुधाजलधे महितोपनिषत् कथितार्थनिधे ।
हृदये कलये विमलं चरणं भव शंकर देशिक मे शरणम् ॥
- तोटकाष्टकं -1

O Thou, The Knower Of All The Milk-Ocean Of Scriptures! The Expounder Of The Topics Of Great Upanisadic Treasure-Trove! **On Thy Faultless Feet I Meditate In My Heart. Be Thou My Refuge O preceptor, Sankara. I meditate on Your pure lotus feet in my heart | O Preceptor Shankara, be my refuge**.

- toTakAShTaka.m – 1

|| ॐ श्री गणेशाय नमः ||

|| ॐ श्री गुरु शरणम् ||

|| ॐ श्री रामकृष्ण शरणम् ||

|| ॐ श्री रमण महर्षि शरणम् ||

|| ॐ श्री आदि शंकर शरणम् ||

|| ॐ श्री परमात्माने नमः ||

|| Om Shri Ganeshaya Namah ||

|| Om Shri Guru Sharanam ||

|| Om Shri Ramakrishna Sharanam ||

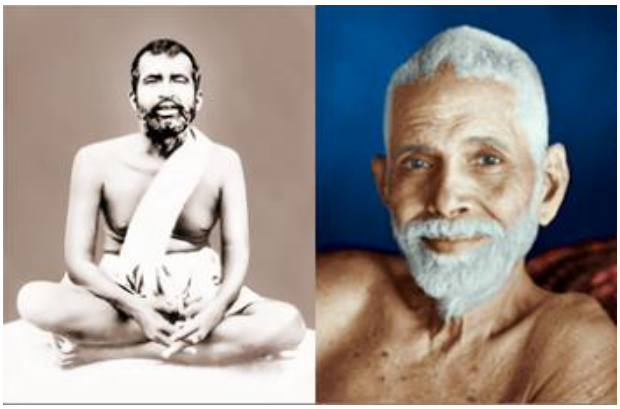
|| Om Shri Ramana Maharshi Sharanam ||

|| Om Shri Adi Shankara Sharanam ||

|| Om Shri Paramatmane Namah ||

DEDICATED TO

This article is dedicated to Lotus feet of Guru _/_ (As it was my guru who introduced this ignorant soul to vedAnta and the great lineage of Adi SankarAcArya)



Dedicated to Shri Ramakrishna Paramhansa and Shri Ramana Maharshi whose teachings have deep impact on Amrut's life.

I would also like to dedicate this article to the lotus feet of all the acharyas and Gurus who have kept the holy tradition of Guru-Shishya Parampara alive.

All that is useful is my Guru's grace, all errors are mine.

How can Dedication to Brahman, the Supreme Self, substratum of entire universe be forgotten!!!

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Total Pages: 687

Pages numbered from TOC = 682

Pages excluding TOC, Preface, and Intro to Site's Content: 687-25 = 662 pages

Actual Content is 662 Pages for Version 16.0.1 beta

CHANGELOG

Current Version Live on Website | PDF | Docx: v16.0.1.b updated on 20-Feb-2023

Update #16.0.1.b Dt 20-Feb-2023 -
Updated Advaita in Shastras - Advaita in Bhagavat Purana - Kapila Gita Gave correct references of Kapila Gita. Shloka Nos of Kapila Gita KG are that of Kapila Gita Sara, shlokas selected by Swami Tejomayananda. Shloka Nos of corresponding Bhagavat Purana are also given.
Updated Concepts of Advaita in sAstra-s - Gave correct references of Kapila Gita. Shloka Nos of Kapila Gita (KG) are that of Kapila Gita Sara, shlokas selected by Swami Tejomayananda. Shloka Nos of corresponding Bhagavat Purana are also given. Following Sections were updated -

MAyA and Unreality of the world
Jiva is destroyed
Concepts on puruSa
nirvikalp samAdhi in bhAgavat purANa

Update #16.0.0.b Dt 08-Dec-2022 - Updated Adi Sankara - A Jagadguru - multiple updates
Updated Current SankarAcArya-s (Shankaracharyas)
Added YouTube Channels of all five Shankaracharyas,
Updated GauDapadAchArya KavaLe math details - added the list of all Gurus (mathAdhipatI-s) in the lineage.) under Current SankarAcArya-s (Shankaracharyas)
Added Fake SankarAchAryas - Dangerous to our Dharma and real SankarAchArya-s
Added Lineage of Sankaracharya Matha-s (List in Excel)
Last Update: 05-Dec-2022 - Updated GauDapadAchArya KavaLe math details and Chitrapur Math details under Current SankarAcArya-s (Shankaracharyas)
2nd last Update: 11-Sep-2022 - Updated SankarAchArya of Jyotirmath and Dvarka (sharda) matha under Current SankarAcArya-s (Shankaracharyas)

Update #15.4.0.b Dt 13-Aug-2022 - added new heading mithyA in Concepts of Advaita in sAshtras
Update #15.3.0.b Dt 13-Aug-2022 - added new heading paramagati and Yoga in kaTha Upanishad 2.3.10-11 in Concepts of Advaita in sAshtras
Update #15.2.0.b Dt 25-Jun-2022- added new heading vyavahArIka satya and pArmArthika satya in viShNu purANa in Concepts of Advaita in sAshtras
Update #15.1.1.b Dt 19-Apr-2022- added new page PrakaraNa Granthas and Preface (First Update after v14.1.0.b updated 14th Aug 2016)

Click on the above link to visit the relevant heading

Credit: Thanks to Allen Wyatt of tips.net for helping in 'Getting a Proper Total Page Count'

PREFACE AND INTRODUCTION TO SITE'S CONTENTS

Preface

The Purpose …

Namaste Divine Atmans,

This site was created for the following reasons

1. To give basic understanding of advaita
2. To give clarity on the philosophy of Advaita Vedanta
3. To examine some of the objections and then refuting them
4. Giving references from Shastras supporting Advaita Vedanta
5. To encourage sincere seekers to take up the study of advaita in a proper way by studying and contemplating on the divine teachings of our shastras.
6. Finally to work on the fourth purushartha – moksha by purifying mind and after attaining sufficient purification, being free from lower emotions like hatred, etc and sincerely begin sAdhanA on OM or practice Neti-Neti under the guidance of a competent guru. This is the ultimate purpose of this site.

After understanding basic concepts of advaita, and clearing doubts and accusations laid by other sampradayas on advaita, one becomes clear in the heart and mind that advaita is genuine siddhanta based on vedanta.

Objective behind refuting objections (most of them are raised by Gaudiyas) is to establish firm faith in advaita and it's genuineness. After being convinced by the refutation, faith in advaita becomes stronger.

Like all vedantic siddhantas, advaita can definitely be applied in our practical life, without which it would be just a dry philosophy no matter how much appealing it is.

sAdhanA is extremely important in order to progress on any spiritual path. Just getting convinced intellectually is not enough. Hence, after attaining sufficient purification of mind i.e. after satva guNa becomes the predominant guNA, and the extrovert mind becomes introvert, one can then successfully meditate the advaita way on OM or practice nididhyAsana via neti-neti. There is no mukti without sAdhanA. It is the fruit of sAdhanA that the ignorance is removed and mind without any effort merges into Atman which is Brahman. In other words jIva-bhAva is shred by a-sanga shastra, by being a witness,

kshetraGYa. The 'I' which is so dear and near that it is inseparable from 'AtmA' is realised. This 'I' or AtmA is Brahman. While jIva-s are many, AtmA or Atman is one. jIva is bhAva, which the collection of mind, 5 bodies, 5 senses and antaHkaraNa. All are connected by Ego. It is the jIva that is trapped in the cycle of birth and death due to sakAma karma. Atman is ever free, omnipresent and immovable unlike jIva which is trapped In space and time and is ignorant of it's true nature. Atman is Brahman. jIva without the sense of 'I-ness' which is attachment, without that which is an-Atman (not atman), is nothing but Atman, ever free from bondage, from attachment, from false sense of ego. In other words, jIva without false identification is Atman or Brahman. In the entire sAdhanA, this 'I' is never lost. Only that which binds this 'I' with anatman (not-Atman) is detached and disappears from consciousness. This 'I' then shines by itself like the Sun shines clear and bright after the clouds disappear.

I humbly pray that may we all attain this blissful state of Atma-GYAna (Self Realisation) in this life itself. This is the ultimate purpose of our life and so the purpose of this work too.

Since one cannot have lower emotions like hatred in the heart for anyone and then expect AtmaGYAna, one has to be free from the the tAmasika and the rAjasika bhAvas and be in satva guNa as this is the only guNa that gives one's mind, ability to withdraw the senses and make it introvert. Only an introvert mind, which remains undistracted from external objects and impulses and internal images (in the mind), is capable of merging in Atman. Though this process is said to be the merging, it is, in reality, just detachment of consciousness 'I' from the mind. A sAdhaka also realises that 'I' and mind are different and this 'I' is the source of mind's power. How foolish 'I' was to think it otherwise!!!. Nothing ever happened to me (as I am infinite consciousness. Space and time does not exist in me), I am eternally free, was always free. Constant abiding in this blissful state and being in this state of consciousness without any effort leads to jivan mukti. It also leads to the vision and direct experience that this world is also Brahman. Everything else is also Brahman (sarvam khalu-idam Brahma). So from Brahma satya jagad mithyA (experienced in sAdhanA – vivarta vAda) to Brahma satya (nothing else exists, nirvikalpa samadhi and ajAta vAda) to sarvam khalu-idam-brahma (ekatva – eko Brahma, experiencing oneness) – all is experienced by the grace of Guru and Ishvara.

To reiterate, the sole aim is to refute the false objections, clear the doubt and strengthen the faith in advaita. The aim is not to cultivate hatred rather to cultivate the nAhi-nindA-nyAya and be neutral and detached, always looking inwards. Let Peace and Bliss flow continuously through us.

nAhi-nindA nyAya

Paramacharya asks us to adopt Nahi Ninda Nyaya. The purpose of exalting a particular deity over the another is not to depreciate the latter. The underlying idea is that a person who worships his chosen god has unflinching faith in him and becomes totally devoted to him. Such exclusive devotion is called "ananyabhakti". **The idea here, however, is not to regard other devatas as inferior to one's own chosen deity- an example of "nahi ninda nyaya".**

Introduction to the site's content

Namaste Fellow Advaitins,

This site is dedicated to fellow Advaitins and aims at giving clear picture of Advaita, Meditative Journey of an Advaita Vedantin, Dispelling Doubts, accusations by other Vedantic schools, Giving References of Shastras that Support Advaita, as taught by GauDapadAchArya, Adi Shankara, his successors and other modern saints following Traditional Advaita.

A special page has been dedicated to understand a unique traditional teaching passed on to and by Shri Gaudapadacharya and Adi Shanakracharya ji. This method was re-discovered by Sri Sacchidanandendra Saraswati Swami of Holenarsipur. It is called adhyAropa apavAda.

Site is divided into 6 main categories:

PART I: Advaita Vedanta

This part is theoretical in nature. It is written in simple and easy to understand language without much use of quoting shastra-s except the last part which clears accusations on advaita. This part is not of polemical nature.

a. Understanding Advaita

- This section attempts to correctly project Advaita.
- Explains basic concept of Advaita along with common terminology and definition of basic terms used in advaita, as defined by Adi Shankara in his PrakaraNa grantha-s.
- It also goes into subtler details, in brief, which can be useful for sincere advaitins who regularly meditate for attaining moksha.
- Some FAQs are also included

Advaita teaches to go beyond maayaa, beyond attributes and be free from concepts of duality and non-duality, beyond (worldly and scriptural) knowledge and ignorance. Advaita also teaches that everything else that you see is Brahman.

c. prakaraNa granthas *(added on 13-Mar-2022)*

PrakaraNa granthas are the basic texts that define and explain the basic concepts of Advaita. A List of few prakaraNa granthas (not exhaustive) is provided with brief explanation.

c. adhyAropa apavAda - A Consistent Traditional Teaching

This part deals with unique Traditional way of teaching as passed on to and by by Shri Gaudapadacharya and Adi Shanakracharya ji. According to Swami Sacchidanandendra Saraswati, it is the only consistent method of teaching.

d. Meditative Journey of an Advaita Vedantin

This part deals with Meditative journey of an Advaita Vedantin. It explains meditation on OM and method of negation i.e. Neti - Neti along with other subtle points.

e. Advaita, Creation and it's practicability

This part explains questions related to theories of creation w.r.t advaita vedanta and practical application of advaita vedanta.

f. Q and A

Simple explanation of basic concepts given in Q and A format

g. Musings - Other Side of Coin

In this page, we have presented musings which represent 'other side of coin' of certain concepts which are generally taken to [obviously] mean a specific thing.

Words like param dhAma, param pada, param gati, bhagavAn, deva, ISvara, paramAtmA all point to one thing - brahman. param dhAma is param jyoti, or consciousness which is GYana

param dhAma is not vaikuntha, but bhagavAn himself

h. viShNu and caturbhuja viShNu

This page explains that it is not necessary that whenever the word 'viShNu' is used, it always means caturbhuja holding with discuss, conch, mace and lotus. viShNu bhagavAn, as deity of preservation is different from paramAtmAn viShNu, which is GYAnasvarUpa or AtmasvarUpa or cidAtmA. When instructions are given to meditate on viShNu as AtmasvarUpa or sUtrAtmA, antaryAmin, cidAtmA or GYAnasvarUpa, it is always nirguNa brahman, pure consciousness and not caturbhuja viShNu i.e. viShNu bhagavAn as a person.

i. Siva-viShNu abheda

As the name suggests, this page is dedicated to explaining Siva-viShNu abheda in SAStra-s.

j. Clearing Accusations & Doubts

This part attempts to clear doubts, accusations and correct misunderstandings.

Advaitins are taught to remain calm and neutral when someone verbally attacks them. Every sincere seeker practices his / her path with full faith and devotion. Personal attack can be ignored, but what if it someone attacks the very faith you are practicing? For new comers this will be quite a shock.

- Vaishnavas wrongly accuse Adi Shankaracharya being a mayavadi and a hidden Buddhist.
- They accuse of Advaita being non-vedic.
- They incorrectly say that Avaita is maayaavaad, though it is brahmavaad (niraakaara and vivarta and ajaata vaad)
- Some of them even go on to say that Adi Shankara was a demon who walked on earth and anyone following his teachings will be doomed.
- Some even go further that followers of Shankara as "tyrannical people who burned down monasteries, destroyed cattle and killed women and children" - *source Wikipedia article on Advaita Vedanta, refer to Dvaita --> search for 'kill' and you will find the above statement*

The purpose of writing this article is that I tried to find the truth and had to spend much time to collect facts that conclude: Advaita, as taught by Adi Shankara is authentic and is consistent with Vedas, upanishads, Puranas and Bhagavad Gita.

Hitting back at accusers is avoided, as we are taught to feel compassion and not hatred. One cannot have lower animal emotions if one wants to progress in spirituality.

I just want to convey the correct understanding to fellow advaitins so that when anyone tries to defame or accuse Advaita or Adi Shankara, they know it's a strawman. No one correctly practising Advaita, as taught by Adi Shankaracharya and his preceptors and vedic Rishis will be doomed, in fact, he will be freed from the miserable cycle of birth and death and will sit on the pinnacle of truth.

PART II: Advaita in shastras

This part contains quotes from shastras supporting the theory of advaita vedanta,

a. Advaita in Shastras

Shastras are an authority, any path has to be consistent with them. Vedas, Upanishads and Bhagavad Gita are the pillars of Sanatana Dharma. Hence Reference to advaita teachings in shastras has to be pointed out. References from various smritis (bhagavad Gita, Guru Gita, Uttara Gita, Shiva Gita and other lesser known Gitas) and shrutis (major and minor upanishads) are given. References from Srimad Bhagavatam are also quoted.

This part has been the most difficult, not because it is tough to get details, but it has put me in a fix. I am trying to prove, acknowledge that Advaita is authentic and Adi Shankaracharya is genuine. After collecting references from shastras that teach Advaita, we can say,

'Yes Advaita is authentic, consistent with Vedas and Adi Shankara was one of the greatest proponent of traditional advaita'

This word Yes, gives me pain. It show the acknowledgement. I feel it is an insult to the entire system and the great beloved acharya Shri Adi Shankara, as a ajnani cannot judge a jnani, nor one should try to.

This site is my silent response. It's an attempt to give correct picture and leave it's discretion to the reader. More than a response, I have created this site as I do not want others to waste time collecting references from shastras. After going through this website, questioning and acknowledgement should be replaced by Faith and one should say,

'Advaita is authentic, consistent with Vedas and Adi Shankara was one of the greatest proponent of traditional advaita'

Even if one person would speak the above statement from heart, my humble attempt will be fulfilled.

b. Brahman in Upanishads

This page is a collection of words connected to Brahman in shastras.

c. Concepts of Advaita in Shastras

This page attempts to find advaitic concepts like Brahman, Atman, etc from shastras.

d. Random Quotes and Thoughts

This page is a collection of random but useful quotes from Shastras. It may also have some other useful information other than quotes from shastras.

PART III: Conspiracies against Bhartiyas

a. Conspiracies against Bhartiyas

British East India Company wanted to rule India. In this quest they setup Asiatic Society with 24 + members, like H.H. Wilson, Jones and others to interpret our shasras in a demeaning way. They also hired Max Muller to interpret shastras in a wicked way. they

also made attempts to demean our deva bhASa sanskrit and tried to create Pro-Indo-Euro Language as the mother of all languages including Sanskrit. They fabricated a myth called Aryan Invasion theory. Dharm Chakravarty Swami Prakashananda Saraswati had decoded their ways and have presented scientific proofs to support his claims in exposing so-called western scholar, Indologists and Linguists having hidden agenda to destroy our culture and our shastras. These men also corrupted our dharma sAstra-s and grihya sUtra-s and bhavishya purANa. Unfortunately their line of thinking are still followed today.

This page is a must read for all Hindus.

PART IV: Adi Shankara - A Jagadguru

a. Adi Sankara - A Jagadguru

Logical reasoning given as to why Adi Sankara is called as Jagadguru.

PART V: Works of Adi Shankara

This page attempts to support works attributed to Adi Shankara and his preaching of smArta dharma.

a. Questioning Authenticity of works attributed to Adi Shankara

This part attempts to show the reason why some scholars do not consider the works attributed to Adi Shankara are genuinely acharya's creation and finding limitations in their adopted process for critical examination of works.

b. References cited by Adi Shankara in his Bhashya on Vishnu Sahasranama

This part lists references cited by Sri Adi Shankara Bhagavadpada in his Vishnu Sahasranama bhashya.

c. Adi Shankara Preached Smarta Dharma

This part attempts to support the common belief that Adi Shankara preached smArta dharma.

PART VI: Authentic Shastras

a. Authentic Upanishads and Gitas

Traditionally there are 108 upanishads. Some scholars do not accept all 108 upanishads listed in Muktika Upanishad. This part tries to understand the reason behind their claim and the method adopted by them for critical study of any shastra before accepting it as a genuine shruti. It also lists authentic shastras with citations of them in works of traditional acharyas.

b. Authenticity Puranas, Up-Puranas and Shala Puranas

Logical reasoning is provided from advaita POV in support of claim that all purANa-s are authentic. Verses in padma purANa-s classifying purANa-s into sAttvika, rAjasika, tAmasika are refuted by quoting another classification given in padma purANa. Other reasons like comparing purANa-s with mAhAbhArata and vedA-s and vedAnta are given in support of claim.

Lastly, whatever good you find is my Guru's Grace and whatever negative you find is my own.

May this humble attempt bring inner peace to Fellow Advaitins and other sincere spiritual seekers. May we all move beyond the realm of vaad-vivaad is my humble prayer.

|| ॐ तम नमामि गुरूम् परम ||

Aum

Indiaspirituality Amrut

Lets begin our journey by Understanding Advaita

Part I

Advaita Vedanta

Salutations to Param Guru - Guru Gita

Let us begin with salutations to our Guru who is none other than Sat-Chit-Anand Atma / Brahman

यस्य प्रसादादहमेव सर्वं मय्येव सर्वं परिकल्पितं च |
इत्थं विजानामि सदात्मरूपं त्स्यांघ्रिपद्मं प्रणतोऽस्मि नित्यम् ||

By whose grace that one realizes "I am everything, everything is superimposed in me, I offer my salutations and worship to my self-realised Satguru's lotus feet. (215)

कुलं धनं बलं शास्त्रं बान्धवास्सोदरा इमे |
मरणे नोपयुज्यन्ते गुरुरेको हि तारकः ||

Family traditions, wealth, strength, shastras, relatives, brothers, - none of these are useful to you at the time of death. Satguru is the only saviour. (188)

अज्ञानतिमिरान्धस्य विषयाक्रान्तचेतसः |
ज्ञानप्रभाप्रदानेन प्रसादं कुरु मे प्रभो ||

O Lord, by the gift of the light of knowledge, may Thy blessings be bestowed on me, whose eyes are covered by the cataracts of ignorance, and whose mind is captured by sense pleasure. (216)

Refer Glories of Param Guru

What is Advaita Vedanta

The word 'Advaita' (अद्वैत) means non-duality. It is a philosophy which describes that there is only one reality and one truth i.e. Brahman. All else is not real, not eternal and is of transient nature. Brahman is changeless, formless, indivisible, unchanging, immutable, beyond guna-s (attributes), beyond the reach of 5 senses, mind and beyond the realms of mAyA (माया).

A + Dvaita (अ + द्वैत)= Advaita
Dvaita (द्वैत) = Duality,
A-Dvaita = not- duality = non-duality

Vedanta means the end parts of Vedas, which contains the essence of Vedas. Here the end part is to be taken as essence and not literally 'end' part.

Hence, Advaita Vedanta can be defined as a marg (path) which teaches the essence of vedas that there is one supreme reality (non-dual) - NirguNa Brahman (निर्गुण ब्रह्म).

Advaita Vedanta teaches that this world is transient, temporary, adobe of sorrows, and mithya (मिथ्या). It is due to the power of God's Maya (illusion) that this world looks different than Brahman. Brahman alone is reality.

Advaita asks one to raise from Sharira bhava (शरीर भाव) to Jiva bhava (जीव भाव) to Atma Bhava (आत्म भाव). According to Advaita, Jiva (जीव) and Shiva (शिव, brahman, ब्रह्म) are not different. Entire advaita can be summed up in half verse as

ब्रह्म सत्यं जगन्मिथ्या जीवो ब्रहैव नापरः - ब्रह्म ज्ञानावलीमाला - २०

Brahma Satyam Jagan Mithya Jivo Brahmaiva Na Aparah" - Brahma Jnanavali mala- 20

Brahman (ब्रह्म, the Absolute) is alone real; this world is unreal; the Jiva (जीव) or the individual soul is non-different from Brahman (ब्रह्म).

The full verse is

ब्रह्म सत्यं जगन्मिथ्या जीवो ब्रहैव नापरः
अनेन वेद्यं सच्छास्त्रमिति वेदान्तड्ढिण्डिमः - - ब्रह्म ज्ञानावलीमाला - २०

brahma satyam jaganmithyA jIvo brahmaiva nAparah
anena vedyam sacchAstram iti vedAntaDiNDimah–*Brahma Jnanavali mala- 20*

20. Brahman (ब्रह्म) is real, the universe is mithya (मिथ्या), it cannot be categorized as either real or unreal. The jiva (जीव) is Brahman (ब्रह्म) itself and not different. This should be understood as the correct SAstra (शास्त्र). This is proclaimed by Vedanta.

This half verse is also found in nirAlambopanishad:

ब्रह्म सत्यं जगन्मिथ्या जीवो ब्रह्मैव नापरः (निरालम्बोपनिषद - २८)

"Brahma Satyam Jagan Mithya Jivo Brahmaiva Na Aparah" - nirAlambopaniShada - 28 Niraalamba Upanishad - 28)

Brahman (ब्रह्म, the Absolute) is alone real; this world is unreal; the Jiva or the individual soul is non-different from Brahman.

Adi Shankaracharya was one of the greatest proponent of Advaita Vedanta. Though most people stick to Brahma satya, jagat mithyA, Adi Shankara did not stop at jagat mithya, he went on the say that Jagat satyam. This Jagat satyam is not from dual point, but from atma sthiti (आत्मस्थिति). It is conveyed by another mahAvAkya (महावाक्य), sarvam khalu-idam brahma (सर्वं खलु इदं ब्रह्म) i.e. everything else is (also) brahman.

Important concepts of Advaita Vedanta that one frequently comes across are

1. Brahman Satyam
2. Jagat MithyA
3. Jiva and Brahman are not Different
4. Brahman due to it's mAyA (माया) appears as this world.
5. Everything else is also Brahman
6. Atman is Sat-Chit-Ananda and not different from Brahman.

Basic Concepts of Advaita in Points

Talking in more detail, here are some basic concepts of advaita:

1. Brahman is the only reality i.e. Truth is one. (ekam Sat - Rig Veda 1.164.46)

2. Brahman is beyond 3 guna-s (त्रिगुणातीत), time, space, mAyA (माया), and 5 senses.

3. Brahman is one without a second. There is no duality in Brahman (ब्रह्म).

4. Brahman is without beginning and end.

5. Brahman is indescribable, indivisible, undivided, peaceful, immutable, infinite, subtlest and omnipresent.

6. Brahman is nirAkAra (निराकार).

7. Brahman is Sat-Chit-Ananda Svarupa (सच्चिदानन्द स्वरूप).

8. Brahman is jnana Svarupa (ज्ञान स्वरूप).

9. Brahman has independent existence and does not depend upon anything else.

10. Brahman when working through mAyA (माया), it's illusionary power, is called as saguNa brahman (सगुण ब्रह्म) or Ishwara (ईश्वर).

11. mAyA (माया) is mithyA (मिथ्या) i.e. it is neither real nor completely unreal. Though it is unreal, it appears to be real.

12. Both Ishwara and Jiva have upAdhi-s (उपाधि)

13. Ishwara (SaguNa Brahman, सगुण ब्रह्म) is not different than Brahman (ब्रह्म) and is not under the spell of mAyA (माया) i.e. bound by mAyA (माया) whom Ishwara controls.

14. mAyA (माया) does not have independent existence. It depends upon and rest upon Brahman (ब्रह्म).

15. Jiva is the same Brahman which associates itself with avidhA mAyA (अविधा माया) i.e. panchamahAbhuta (पञ्चमहाभूत).

16. Ishwara has 6 upAdhi-s (उपाधि), but is not bound by it.

17. When upAdhi-s (उपाधि) of both jiva (जीव) and Ishwara (ईश्वर) are removed, what is left is NirguNa Brahman (निर्गुण ब्रह्म) or simply Brahman (ब्रह्म).

18. Perceiving duality (द्वैत) is due to error in perception. Technically Jiva (जीव) is not different than Shiva (Brahman, शिव, ब्रह्म)

19. Atman (आत्मा) is Sat-Chit-Ananda (सच्चिदानन्द) and not different from Brahman (ब्रह्म).

20. 'I' atma when associates with jiva gets trapped into this samsAra (संसार), when it associates itself with Brahman (ब्रह्म) it merges into brahman (ब्रह्म) loosing it's individual identity.

21. There are three levels of truths - vyavahArika satya (व्यवहारिक सत्य), prAtibhAsika satya (प्रातिभासिक सत्य) and pArmArthIk satya (पारमार्थिक सत्य)

22. Jiva was never separated from Brahman as Brahman is indivisible.

24. mAyA (माया) or jiva (जीव) or jagat (जगत) does cease to exist in nirvikalpa samAdhi (निर्विकल्प समाधि). In other words, existence of mAyA (माया), jiva (जीव) and jagat (जगत) are negated in nirvikalpa samAdhi (निर्विकल्प समाधि)

25. Jnana (ज्ञान) cannot be given as one is already Brahman (ब्रह्म). Atman (आत्मा) is Brahman (ब्रह्म). Only ajnana (अज्ञान, ignorance) can be removed.

26. Though mAyA (माया) is beginning-less (अनादि) it's ends in Jnana (ज्ञान) i.e. it's existence is negated in nirvikalpa samAdhi (निर्विकल्प समाधि).

27. Existence of Jiva is not eternal.

28. After negation of what is 'not this' Neti-Neti (नेति-नेति) i.e. Na-iti - Na-iti (न-इति - न-इति) meaning 'not-this, not-this', *that which is not atman (आत्मा) or is different than 'I' (अहम्)*, only pure consciousness remains.

To explain these concepts, Adi Shankara out of compassion created prakaraNa grantha-s (प्रकरण ग्रन्थ). PrakaraNa grantha-s are introductory texts that give definitions of key concepts of Advaita (अद्वैत). Other than Adi Shankara, his disciples and successors have also created some prakaraNa grantha-s and written commentaries (bashya-s, भाष्य) and annotations (vArttika, वार्तिक). Others have named commentary as dipikA (दिपिका) or chandrikA (चन्द्रिका), some call it as bhava prakAsha (भाव प्रकाश). Sub commentary is called as laghu dipikA (लघु दिपिका), as used by some recent commentators.

Tatva Bodh (तत्व बोध) is the first text that should be referred. Later Vivek Chudamani (विवेक चुणामणि) should be referred. Atma Bodh (आत्म बोध), aparokshAnubhuti (अपरोक्षानुभुति) is also very useful. PanchAdashi (पंचादशी) by vidyAraNya Swami (विद्यारण्य स्वामी) is considered as manual of advaita. Other prakaraNa grantha-s are Naishkarmya Siddhi (नैष्कर्म्य सिद्धि) by SureshvarAchArya (सुरेश्वराचार्य) and vAkya vritti (वाक्य वृति) by Adi Shankara.

Tatva Bodh (तत्व बोध) defines basic concepts and terms used in advaita (अद्वैत). It answers questions like

What is Jiva (जीव)

What is Atman (आत्मा)

What is Brahman (ब्रह्म)

What is Mithya (मिथ्या)

What is Nitya (नित्य) and a-nitya (अनित्य)

What is satya (सत्य) and a-satya (असत्य)

PanjikaraNa prakriyA (पञ्चीकरण प्रक्रिया) - creation of this world, bodies - gross (sthUla, स्थूल शरीर) and subtle (sUkshma, सुक्ष्म शरीर), mana (मन), antakaraNa (अन्तःकरण) etc are explained.

Vivek Chudamani, though a prakaraNa grantha (प्रकरण ग्रन्थ) is very long comprising of 582 sloka-s (verses). Even though it is a prakaraNa granth (प्राकरण ग्रन्थ) , it contains indepth knowledge and is considered as capable of giving moksha if studied thoroughly.

In advaita Vedanta, one meditates on the SELF and establishes himself in the true nature. Some of them call it meditation on the absolute Brahman. A vedantin does not consider himself different from the God / Atman / Brahman. Hence he meditates with ananya bhAva (अनन्य भाव), i.e. I am not different from Brahman. (अ+anya = अ+अन्य = अनन्य. a +anya = ananya, not+different = not-different).

Followers of advaita practice meditation on Aum / Om or practice Self Enquiry as prescribed by Sri Ramana Maharshi.

sAdhaka-s are requested to study these prakaraNa granth-s before taking up Bhagavad Gita. This is necessary to understand Gita from Advaita standpoint. Since you will find the explanation of basic terminology and concepts from these books, detailed explanation is not intended here. Lets understand these terms in brief. References from Shastras may be given in future if time permits.

Some key words in Advaita are:

Brahman or nirguNa Brahman (ब्रह्म, निर्गुण ब्रह्म)

Ishwara or saguNa Brahman (ईश्वर, सगुण ब्रह्म)

mAyA and mithyA (माया, मिथ्या)

jagat (जगत)

jIva (जीव)

Atma or Atman (आत्मा)

nitya-anitya (नित्य - अनित्य)

moksha (मोक्ष)

Three types of vAsanA-s (वासना) and their renunciations

Three levels of truth: vyavahArika satya, prAtibhAsika satya and pArmArthika satya.

Jivanmukti and Videha Mukti

Lets take understand one by one.

Brahman (ब्रह्म)

Advaita defines two Brahmans, saguNa (सगुण) and nirguNa (निर्गुण). When simply written 'brahman' it means nirguNa brahman.

nirguNa brahman (निर्गुण ब्रह्म)

NirguNa brahman is a considered as formless, indivisible, unchanging, attributeless, beyond mAyA and peaceful. Brahman is Sat-Chit-Anand

Here people wrongly interpret the word nirguNa (attributeless) as sunya (zero) or void or blank. Brahman is not a negative state. Upon careful study of Gita and Upanishads, it can be understood that brahman is beyond guNa-s (गुणातीत). Brahman is one without second, it is supreme, peaceful and Sat-Chit-Anand (सत्-चित्-आनन्द). Brahman is said to be inexpressible, meaning that words cannot describe it, 5 senses cannot experience it. So one has to go beyond the realm of senses, mind and mAyA to experience oneness with Brahman. If one says that 'I am experiencing peace' then one is defining Brahman which is beyond 5 senses. A better word is Brahman is peace. It is true that Brahman cannot be defined, but for the sake of explanation, rishis have made attempts to describe brahman in a dual tone so that disciple can finally rise above duality and abide in Brahman. The knower of Brahman is none other than Brahman itself.

Here nirguNa brahman is not to be considered as negative. It is ananda svarupa (आनंद स्वरूप), but you are not different to experience it. Hence the word non-dual is used to indicate that there is no duality of observer (दृष्टा, witness) and object of observation (दृश्य). To observe, witness, experience or see anything one has to be conscious of it. e.g. to see a car, your consciousness has to be in the physical body, else if you are day dreaming, even if car is in front if you, you cannot see it. In the same way to experience or be a witness, consciousness has to be present i.e. one has to be aware of 'object of observation'. Hence there is duality. After the object of observation has merged into

observer only pure consciousness remains. But how can the object merge. Because it is just a mental projection, a false perception due to illusion of mAyA (माया). When one knows the art of discriminating real and unreal and see the source, one sees Brahman everywhere. Hence it is said that the knower of Brahman is not different that Brahman itself. Hence it is said that sarvam khalu-idam Brahman (सर्वं खलु इदं ब्रह्म) - whatever *else* you see is also Brahman or everything (else) is Brahman. It is not different from you, it is not separate from you. If it is made of same material as you are but yet you are different, then it would falsify the definition of Brahman being indivisible and immutable. Hence you cannot say that 'I am the part and Brahman is full'. The concept of qualitatively same but quantitatively different will violate shruti and hence cannot be accepted.

If you say that - this is a rose flower. It means that you are not rose flower. Hence you are different than rose flower. In the same way when you say that 'Hi, I am Amrut', you use to word 'I' and not 'this'. Please note the difference. Here 'I' is associated with physical body, as our consciousness is strongly associated with physical body. Hence we do not say that 'This is Amrut' (even though recently we do say - this is Amrut, is is grammatically incorrect)

Anything that is not you is pointed as 'This', which is said as 'idam' in sanskrit. The path of advaita is self enquiry. It is called as path of negation - 'Neti - Neti' (नेति - नेति). nA-iti, nA-iti (न-इति, न-इति) means 'not this, not this'. **Idea is to separate or dis-associate or detach *'I'* from that is *not 'I'*. Hence it is called as path of negation (of non self). Please note that one cannot negate oneself. One cannot deny one's own existence as any time.** 'I' cannot be negated, only that is different from 'I' can be negated. After negating which is '*not you*', like peeling off layers of onion, what is left is emptyness, just you. Empty means nothing more remains to be negated. Now nothing that can be seen is left. In other words, there is no 'drashya padArtha' (दृश्य पदार्थ, visible object or object of observation). Kindly note that in this process, observer is not negated, hence only the observer remains.

Let us understand this with the help of another example.

Name and form are interconnected. There is no form, which does not have a name and there is no name which does not have a form. Brahman is called so only for understanding and explanatory purpose. The moment we here name of object, we visualize it's shape. For example - 'Tree'. As soon as I speak the word *'Tree'*, a shape appears in front of you. A small demonstration will help understand better. When is say, *'This is a mango tree'*, mango tree appears in front of you. Now remove, the name which is *'mango tree'*. What remains is just a shape. Now remove shape. Only the knowledge that *this was mango tree* remains. Nothing is in front of you. In other words, the object of observation 'Mango Tree' is absent. Only the observer remains. There is no second.

The thing that remains is just knowledge. Hence Atman is called as Jnana-svarupa (ज्ञान स्वरूप, of nature of giving knowledge). But one can only be aware of anything if one is conscious of it. Hence Atman is pure consciousness. Consciousness is the one which is responsible for any knowledge. In other words consciousness has the quality or nature of giving knowledge. Hence Atman is also called as PrakAsh-svarUpa (प्रकाश स्वरूप, of nature of light). Light also has nature of giving knowledge. We want to find our wrist watch, but cannot find it as the room is dark. When you switch on light, you can locate your wrist watch. Light has nature of giving knowledge. It should be noted that Atman is not light, but of nature of light in a sense that both light and Atman has nature of giving. In other words, Atman is responsible for any kind of knowledge.

Kindly note that the observer himself is not negated, only object of observation is negated. It is said that in Jnana driSTi (ज्ञान दृष्टि) i.e. in state of Atma- Jnana, samsAra (संसार) is negated. Please note that the word used is 'negated' and not 'destroyed'.

Hence one reaches to a conclusion, 'Aham brahmAsmi' (अहं ब्रह्मास्मि) meaning 'I am Brahman' - a mahavakya. Since this 'I' is nothing but pure consciousness, it reflects another mahAakya - PrajnAnam Brahma (प्रज्ञानं ब्रह्म) meaning 'consciousness is brahman'. You began this journey by being in duality and you thought that 'I' is different from Brahman, Hence Guru instructs you into a mahAvAkya 'tat tvam asi' (तत् त्वम् असि) meaning 'That though art' meaning 'you are that Brahman'. After negating what is *not 'I'* , 'I' merges with Brahman. Individual ego merges in Brahman looses it's individual identity. One concludes that 'I' i.e. Self i.e. 'Atman is Brahman' i.e. 'ayamAtmA brahma' (अयमात्मा ब्रह्म) - another mahAvAkya. (Sri Ramana Maharshi says that after Ego dissolves, another 'I-I' springs up spontaneously. But this is not ego. it is pUrNa vastu (पूर्ण वस्तु, completeness). Hence this 'I' is called as Atman (which is none other than Brahman.)

These 4 mahavakyas talk about the unity and oneness of Atman, Jiva, and Brahman (आत्मन्, जीव, ब्रह्मन्). Note that here JIva and Atman are used interchangeably. While Jiva stands for Individual Soul, Atman simply means 'I' or 'Self'. This 'I' is associated with Body, precisely 5 kosha-s (पञ्च कोश, 5 bodies), namely

anna-maya kosha (अन्नमयकोश, physical body),

prANa-maya kosha (प्राणमयकोश, energy body),

mano-maya kosha (मनोमयकोश, mental body - mana, मन),

vigyAna-maya kosha (विज्ञानमयकोश, causal body, ego, sthuLa sharira (स्थूल शरीर), karaNa sarira (कारण शरीर), linga sarira (लिंग शरीर), linga deha (लिंग देह), jivAtmA (जीवात्मा) , antakaraNa (अन्तःकरण) and

ananda-maya kosha (आनन्दमयकोश, buddhi body or body of bliss).

The Atman (आत्मन्) is beyond these 5 kosha-s (पञ्चकोशाः).

When 'I' i.e. Atman or Self associates with 5 bodies and identifies itself as body due to ego, it is called as jiva (जीव). When this 'I' associates with Brahman, it becomes Brahman (in dual tone we can say, it experiences itself as brahman)

After entering into nirvikalp samAdhi (निर्विकल्प समाधि), mind becomes dormant and goes to sleep. But it again arises and pulls consciousness back into dual world. Once again it has to merge in Brahman. This process continues. Dormant desires of this life and later of the past lives are destroyed. After repeatedly entering into nirvikalpa samadhi (निर्विकल्प समाधि), mind is finally destroyed. Before entering into meditation (and finally into nirvikalpa samAdhi, निर्विकल्प समाधि) one clearly sees this world and does not see Brahman. When the meditation is complete, one wakes up from meditation and sees this world as Brahman (ब्रह्मन्). Now one sees this world as it actually is i.e. Brahman. In other words, the world is not different from Brahman. One is said to have separated milk from water. mAyA (water, माया) is separated from Brahman (ब्रह्म). This reflects another mahAvAkya - 'sarvam khalu-idam brahma' (सर्वं खलु इदं ब्रह्म) meaning 'Everything else is (also) Brahman'

Without mind, there is no ego, without ego, there is no mind. One ceases to exist is absence of another.

sAdhaka (साधक, disciple, seeker) begins with duality, as one is in duality, later on finds relation with Supreme Brahman and finally ends up being Supreme Brahman. Hence there are three type of Shrutis (upanishads) - Bheda shruti (भेद श्रुति), ghaTaka shruti (घटक श्रुति) and a-bheda shruti (अभेद श्रुति).

*bheda shruti (**भेद श्रुति**):*

Bheda means difference. bheda shruti, as the name suggests talks of jiva and Brahman or ishwara as different. At times Atman is interchangeably used with jiva by non-advaita acharyas.

*a-bheda shruti (**अभेद श्रुति**):*

a+bheda = abheda (अ + भेद = अभेद).

not+different = non-different or non-dual.

Shrutis falling under this category declare one-ness of Atman and Brahman.

*ghaTaka shruti (**घटक श्रुति**):*

The link joining bheda and abheda is called as ghaTaka shruti. They explain the link between jivAtma (जीवात्मा) and paramAtmA (परमात्मा) or antaryAmin (अन्तर्यामी). They are so-called as they synthesize superficially contradictory passages in vedas and upanishads.

saguNa brahman (**सगुण ब्रह्म**) - Ishvara (**ईश्वर**)

When Brahman does the work of creation, preservation and destruction with the help of his mAyA (माया), Brahman (ब्रह्म) is called as saguNa brahman (सगुण ब्रह्म). sa-guNa means with guna-s (गुण). To do anything, i.e. to act, one has to possess guNa-s (गुण). Possessing guNa-s (गुण) does not mean Ishwara is bound by them. Advaita considers all forms of saguNa Brahman i.e. Ishwara or Bhagavan as equal. So for an advaitin, rAma, krishNa, Shiva, nArAyaNa, Brahma, gaNesha, skanda, Adi Shakti are all same, as they represent one and same Brahman.

Position of Ishvara in Advaita

Ishvara is not the final destionation. The word Ishvara is connected with upAdhi-s. Ishvara has 6 upAdhi-s (उपाधि, virtues) - overlordship, power, fame, riches, knowledge and freedom from being wanting (dispassion). Though Ishvara is eternal, he is called so as he is connected with mAyA. Without mAyA, he is NirguNa Brahman. Ishvara, his glories and works attributed to him (creation, preservation and destruction) have to be explained with the help of mAyA. Without mAyA, Ishvara is attributesless. Ishvara is pure consciousness. As Nirvikalp samadhi, which is to transcend mAyA and it's three guNa-s, is the final goal, Ishvara is not the final destination for advaitains. It is ishvara's NirguNa aspect, which exists independently without mAyA that is the final goal of an advaitin.

Though Ishvara is eternal, he is to be explained or to be understood in relation to something.

For e.g., one of the attribute is lordship. It is not an absolute term. It is relative. Lordship over what and whom? So we say Ishvara has lordship over the creation, us, human, and everthing. Here lies the duality i.e. Ishvara is the Lord of all creatures and the entire creation. When there is no creation, there is no second. Hence there is also no lordship.

Similar can be said about other five attributes. Ishvara without attributes is called as attributesless i.e. NirguNa. Hence Ishara (SaguNa Brahman, सगुण ब्रह्म) as pure consciousness, without any attributes is called as NirguNa brahman (निर्विकल्प समाधि). This is the final destination.

Maya as mithyA is unique to Advaita. Lets understand what is mAyA

mAyA and mithyA (माया,मिथ्या)

Satya (सत्य)= one that is present at all times, everywhere, in past, present and future. It is eternal truth

A-satya (असत्य)= one that is not present at any time (past, present or future) - this is generally translated as unreal or false.

Mithya (मिथ्या)= the one which is not there, but it is experienced. It is also defined as something which is not present at all times. For e.g. waking state is absent in dream state, hence it is not eternal, hence mithyA.

One has to rise above mAyA and go beyond it to realize true nature of Self i.e. Brahman.

Maya is defined as *ma* (not) and *ya* (this), meaning *one which is not there*. If one carefully observes Gita, Naishkarmya Siddhi, Tatva Bodh, Vivek Chudamani and some upanishads, mAyA is defined as the one which is not real and not unreal (false). Hence the word used is mithya by Adi Shankara. mithyA (and so mAyA) is often translated as illusion or appearance or unreal.

I do not find an exact English word for 'Maya'. Many people ask to define mAyA. Maya does not have absolute reality. Maya is not independent, but is dependent upon Brahman. Since mAyA has no independent existence, but a relative existence, hence it has to be defined in relation with something else, be it Brahman, Ishvara (Saguna Brahman) or this world.

With Respect to Brahman, and Nirvikalp Samadhi, mAyA is non-existent.

With Respect to Jagat, i.e. relative reality, mAyA is real.

With Respect to Ishvara, mAyA is it's illusionary power (शक्ति, shakti). Note that non-advaita schools consider mAyA and it's creation as an expression of Ishvara.

Relative reality is to be considered for the sake of new disciple, since beginners are always in dvaita bhAva (duality) and consider this world as real. They find it difficult to accept the fact that this world, as they see, is unreal or false. Hence concept of mithyA is created by Adi Shankara, which helps one to satisfactorily answer doubts of new disciples. Advaitins

are taught to withdraw senses and detach, dis-associate with what comes within mAyA i.e. one which is created by mAyA, by being a witness.

There are 4 states of consciousness - waking (जाग्रत), dream (स्वप्न), deep sleep (सुषुप्ति) and the fourth is turiyA (तुरीय), which is beyond three states.

mAyA is only experienced in waking and dream state, but not is deep sleep and turiyA. Hence mAyA is not eternal i.e. it is not present in all states and hence cannot be real. Still since it is experienced in waking and dream state, it is not altogether false, atleast from POV of waking and dream state. Hence it is called as mithyA. From standpoint of supreme reality and from ajAta vAda (अजात वाद) i.e. in braAhmi sthiti, nirvikalpa samAdhi, mAyA is non-existent. Only pure consciousness exists. a-jAta (अजात) means a-janma (अजन्मा). janma (जन्म) means birth. Hence a-jAta (अजात) means one which is not born. Brahman is unborn supreme reality.

Some are more comfortable with mithyA being translated as 'appearance' rather than 'illusion' It helps them to give more logical meaning to their experience of this world. As one progresses, one has to adopt the meaning of mithyA as 'illusion' as it is necessary to eliminate duality.

Applying mithyA (मिथ्या)

In the beginning of our vedantic sAdhanA, one finds it very difficult to accept this phenomenal world as mithyA (illusion). From meditation POV, mithyAtva of this world helps us a lot. How exactly should one apply mithyA?

mithyA is that which is neither true nor false. That which is not true need not be thought of. That which is false need not be thought of. But mithyA is in-between. So what is the solution? mAyA and this world is experienced in day-2-day life. Adi Sankara says this world is relatively real (vyavahArika satya). This world is of destructive nature it is not real or say truth in the language of vedAnta. Hence the only way to apply mithyA in day-2-day life is to neglect the world. Neglecting is not the same as rejecting or destruction of world. It is to stay indifferent.

vedAnta is for those who after performance of many vedika rites and rituals for many years or lives and by doing pUNya karma have become inwardly pure. vedAnta asks one to renounce the very karma whose fruits gave one inner purity. It is time to move ahead, deep within ourselves, diverting our attention from external world and realize our true nature.

In other words vedAta asks one to renounce external activities and kAmya karma (action with expectation of fruits). vedAnta asks one to dive deep within. We give much importance to external world, objects and person and of course to our own body. vedAnta asks one to stop paying attention to all of these and turn our mind inwards. The best way to do is to de-value all that is valued by mind. Accepting this world as mithyA is very helpful. To add to it importance of Brahman is also given. So on one end this world and everything related to it is de-valued and on the other hand, Brahman is valued i.e. given prime importance.

Applying mithyA does not mean not doing any activity, but to minimize activities of sustaining our body i.e. do karma necessary for survival. karma-s like eating sleeping, bath, etc are daily routine actions. Such karma does not hinder our spiritual progress.

To sum up, applying mithyA is a process of making extrovert mind introvert. Introvert mind contemplates on Brahman. Brahman establishes introvert mind into heart.

Many people mix between the definitions of anitya and mithyA

nitya and anitya (**नित्य-अनित्य)**

nitya means SASvat (शाश्वत) meaning eternal, permanent

anitya (अनित्य)means one which is not SASvat (शाश्वत), meaning one which is not eternal or permanent. anitya means of destructive nature. It can also mean temporary existence.

In Tatva Bodh we find Question and answer in the beginning.

Q: What is the difference between nitya and anitya? OR how to discriminate between nitya and anitya?

A: nitya vastu atman is non dual brahman only, anything else is anitya. This is the difference between nitya and anitya.

So what's the difference between anitya and mithyA?

anitya means the one which is destroyed or transformed into something else. e.g. cloth when burned transforms into ash. In this case, the transformation is visible, irreversible and permanent. In other sense, the residue after destruction of an object (cloth) remains.

In illusion, when snake, which was superimposed upon rope gets destroyed due to the throwing of light (Jnana). No trace of snake is left, as technically snake was not actually present. In other words snake was not real, else the traces of snakes should be left after the snake vanishes.

In my opinion, the word 'illusion' better defines mithyA then 'appearance'.

From nitya - anitya viveka i.e. by discrimination between eternal and temporary, one can neglect this world as it is not permanent and subject to constant change. In other words, the worldly objects are not permanent unlike eternal Atman / Brahman and hence wise one should discriminate between nitya vastu Atman and anitya vastu an-atman (not atman), develop dispassion for the an-atman and should withdraw senses from these objects. Withdrawing senses means to neglect or be unconcerned about the presence of objects. This can be done by not giving them importance. This process is called as making the mind introvert. Later on, the introvert mind is focused on chanting mantra OM and is asked to surrender to Brahman.

The viveka of nitya -anitya is given by Shri Adi Shankaracharya out of compassion for sAdhaka-s who cannot digest the truth that this world is an illusion. Hence the first step is to make the mind pure by freeing it of attachments from this worldly objects and surrendering to Brahman. Surrendering to any form of God is also helpful in the beginning. It is the association of 'I' with this worldly objects that creates bondage, which results into sakAma karma (सकाम कर्म), which results into rAga-dveSa (राग - द्वेष्, likes and dislikes), which is responsible for kAma (काम, wish or desire), krodha (क्रोध, anger), lobha (लोभ, greed, covetousness; avarice) and moha (मोह, attachment) thereby making is certain for rebirth and getting trapped in the cycle of birth and death. Shri Nithin Sridhar has explained two karma-s here

But how can likes and dislikes (राग-द्वेष्) give rise to kAma and krodhA (काम-क्रोध)?

It is natural to expect a result of any activity, since lot of effort is put in to accomplish the task.

If you get success in your actions, you will be motivated to repeat the action.

If you get failure in your actions, you will be motivated not to repeat the action and find another solution.

The culprit is the expectation of a desired result from karma (कर्म फल आसक्ति). Which produces likes and dislikes (राग-द्वेष्).

But, how to detach oneself from results?

One can detach in various ways. One of them is by dis-associating 'I' with body and karma and hence it's results. Another simpler way is to dedicate the fruit of karma i.e. result of karma to God. Another way is to work with a bhAva that 'I am an instrument of Ishvara'. Advaita way is to dis-associate with discriminative knowledge and by generating dispassion in the worldly activities. Advaita teaches one to be a witness of karma. But detachment does not happen in a day. It takes time and so one has to regularly meditate upon supreme brahman, or on OM and learn to withdraw the senses back from worldly objects like tortoise withdraws it's limbs. Kindly note that only dispassion is not enough for progress. One also needs to MEditate on Brahman via OM. To fly one needs 2 wings - VairAgya (वैराग्य) and abhyAsa (अभ्यास). VairAgya is dispassion and abhyAsa means to study. It also means to do chintan (चिंतन)), manan (मनन) and nidhidhyAsana (निधिध्यासन). It also means to meditate (ध्यान, साधना, जपa, etc).

Note: *There are many meanings of word 'moha': ignorance, illusion; unconsciousness, swoon; delusion of mind; fascination; infatuation; attachment, love.*

Here some like attachment, fascination, infatuation and to some extend love are direct meaning, while rest are implied or resulting meaning.

VairAgya and doSa-darshan (**वैराग्य - दोष दर्शन**, Dispassion and fault finding)

VairAgya (वैराग्य) is defined as having dispassion in worldly activities, worldly objects and in person. VairAgya (वैराग्य) is not just outward renunciation, it is inward, as desires are not outside us, but in our mind. Bhagavan in Gita says, 'all vAsanA-s (वासना) are in our mind (सर्वान् पार्थो मनोगताम् , sarvAn pArtho manogatAm). Hence vairAgya can also be defined as absence of bhogya padArtha (भोग्य पदार्थ) in mind i.e. absence of worldly objects in mind. (bhogya, भोग्य means one which can be consumed and padArtha, पदार्थ means any object. Here consumed can be taken as fulfilled. Hence bhogya padArtha (भोग्य पदार्थ) means objects that can be fulfilled.)

Upadesha-s (उपदेश, spiritual instructions) are given on adhikAra bheda (अधिकार भेद). Here, adhikAra (अधिकार) means to qualify. Qualifications is based on purity of mind. There are three types of adhikAri-s (अधिकारी) i.e. three type of students.

1. mUDha adhikAri (मूढ अधिकारी)

2. madhyAma adhikAri (मध्यम अधिकारी)

3. uttama adhikAri (उत्तम अधिकारी)

1. mUDha adhikAri (**मूढ अधिकारी)**

mUDha adhikAri is the one who does find it difficult to grasp subtle concepts of Advaita but is eager to learn them and has made moksha as the only goal. sAdhaka falling in this category will find it difficult to accept that this world is mithyA. Hence out of compassion, Adi Shankara has also given nitya-anitya vastu viveka (नित्य-अनित्य वस्तु विवेक). As explained, the definition of anitya (अनित्य) does not include the word 'illusion'.

In advaita, vairAgya (वैराग्य, renunciation) i.e. having dispassion in society, is pre-requisite. To have dispassion one needs to decrease the importance of world, it's objects and person.

Earlier it was explained that one needs wings to fly. Only dispassion or only meditation will not help one to progress in spirituality. Both should go hand in hand. Making mind introvert (अन्तर्मुखी) and developing dispassion is done in two ways

1. Doing dosha darshan (दोष दर्शन) in world, it's objects and person (fault finding in worldly objects)

2. Brahma-bhAvanA (ब्रह्म भावना)- Keep mind occupied with thoughts of Brahman

*1. Dosha Darshan (**दोष दर्शन)***

Dosha darshan or fault finding means to compare them with Brahman. The qualities of both are compared.

It is concluded from tarka (तर्क, logical reasoning) that

1. Nothing is permanent

2. This world is nothing but adobe of sorrows

3. This world is ever changing

4. Destruction is the nature of time

5. Everything in this world will be destroyed one day

6. Relations with persons are very subjective and subject to change from time to time and hence not stable

7. Attachment is the bondage

8. Running behind worldly objects is not wise, as they are temporary, etc

In this way, one does dosha darshan. Please note that here, the word mithYa (मिथ्या) is not used. i.e. world is not considered as illusion, but yet extrovert (बहिर्मुखी) mind is transformed into introvert (अन्तर्मुखी) mind. Later as sAdhaka (साधक) progresses, he/she finds it easier to accept that this world, which is created from mAyA (माया), is nothing but an illusion.

2. Brahma-bhAvanA (***ब्रह्म भावना)***

Brahma-bhAvanA (ब्रह्म भावना) means substitute worldly thoughts with thoughts about Brahman. It is called as *sajAtiya vritti pravAha, vigAtiya tiraskruti (सजातीय वृत्ति प्रवाह, विजातीय तिरस्कृति),* meaning having thoughts of similar nature and renouncing thoughts of opposite nature. Here thoughts related and describing Brahman (ब्रह्म) are similar and encouraged, while other thoughts of opposite nature i.e. of this world, it's objects, day-to-day issues, etc are to be renounced and not given importance. The intention is to keep the mind occupied with thoughts similar to Brahman and thereby not letting worldly thoughts to enter into it. One does not get Jnana (ज्ञान) or realize Brahman from this type of thinking, but it helps block entering of worldly thoughts and hence less time is needed to enter into deep meditation. In other words, time consumed in the beginning of meditation to tune mind and make it introvert is saved. It is also said that by contemplating on Brahman one becomes Brahman (truNa jantu nyAya, तृण जन्तु न्याय, which is explained later), but this is not just mental repetition, it is khoj (खोज), an inner exploration. Dive deep within to gather pearls of wisdom. This path is called neti-neti. It is easier to meditate on OM than to practice neti-neti. Even Brahman bhAvanA may be omited in meditation and one can focus on chanting OM.

Dispassion should be accompanied by power of discrimination (viveka). Hence vairAgya is viveka-yukta vairAgya (विवेक युक्त वैराग्य, dispassion resulting from power of discrimination)

2. madhyama adhikAri (**मध्यम अधिकारी)**

Arjuna (अर्जुन) is an e.g. of madhyAma adhikAri. He would repeatedly argue Bhagavan over same points like is tyagi (त्यागी) better or karma yogi (कर्म योगी) or is sanyAsi (सन्यासी) better or karma yogi (कर्मयोगी), etc. He does not wish to fight yet he leaves everything on bhagavan. Finally after questioning bhagavan for 18 adhAya-s (18 chapters) he realizes his true nature and becomes neutral without any likes and dislikes.

3. uttam adhikAri (**उत्तम अधिकारी)**

rAjA Janak (राजा जनक) was uttam adhikAri. In ashtAvakra Gita (अष्टावक्र गीता), he only asked question once. Guru AshTavakra muni (अष्टावक्र मुनि) answered his questions in first chapter. In the second chapter rAjA Janak becomes enlightened. He instantly became enlightened as, unlike Arjuna, he listened and digested Guru's teachings without any doubt and with full faith. These type of adhikAri-s are very rare.

Jiva (**जीव)**

It can be concluded that the attachment of body and the feeling that 'I' am body is the one that produces bondage. Such a bound soul is called Jiva-atman (जीवात्मा) or simply Jiva (जीव).

Jiva is defined by Adi Shankara in Tatva Bodh and other prakaraNa granths as the one who associates itself with karma and fruits of karma, experiences pleasure and pain by associating with mind, body, intellect and ego. Jiva travels from one body to another and is trapped in the cycle of birth and death.

One cannot be a jiva also as according to shrutis, and smritis, the size of jiva is given as 100th part of hair as in Sv. Up (5.9) and Shiva Gita (chapter 10), while when one meditates and does neti neti (नेति-नेति), one also detaches from jiva bhAva (जीव भाव). One does not feel that one is a small point of light or energy, but one is the witness of body, mind and thoughts. This witness is nothing but consciousness and it is experienced to be infinite and not as a point of light within a specific physical location e.g. within heart, etc. Hence Jiva bhAva (जीव भाव) is only for intermediate seekers. As one progresses, one becomes aware of one-ness of Atman and Brahman. Jiva is defined as the one who enjoys / suffers fruits of karma (कर्मफल) and experiences joy, sorrow by associating with mind, experiencing individuality by associating with ego (अहंकार, ahamkAra) and experience pain by

associating with physical body. By associating with the attributes or in other words dharma of 5 sheaths (कोश, kosha-s), mind, intellect, and ego it assumes that it is 'I' who is experiencing. Hence in Gita it is advised to do karma with the spirit of detachment. Detachment is to be done with fruits of karma i.e. results of action. Similarly one should detach oneself from all that is not atman. One is free from jiva bhAva (जीवभाव) when one dis-associates itself or 'I' from 5 senses, 5 bodies (कोश, sheaths or kosha-s), mind, intellect and ego. But mind when tries to detach needs something to attach to for it's existence. Hence brahma-bhAvanA (ब्रह्म भावना) is prescribed. and it is taught that by contemplating on brahman, one becomes one with brahman.

Mind is divided into 2 parts - viveki (विवेकी, discriminative) and a-viveki (अविवेकी, non-discriminative). Hence when it is said to be a witness, one has to be a witness of a-viveki mana (mind). Still one is in duality, even when one contemplates on brahman, one 'IS" contemplating and it has to be done with the help of mind. The real art is to rise above the mind by taking the help of (viveki) mind. Finally one even drops being a witness and what is left is pure consciousness.

According to Adi Sankara, jIva is technically not different from Brahman, the supreme reality.

Here we are not taking into account the Aishvarya of the Lord, meaning jIva trapped in panchamahAbhUta and acquiring qualities like alpaGYa (ignorant of true nature, having little knowledge), alpavyApI (caged in limited space or place) and alpashaktimAna (having limited power), while Brahman endowing itself with mAyA and becoming Ishvara by willingly acquiring or endowing itself the qualities like sarvaGYa (all-knowledgeable), (sarvavyApI) omnipresent and (sarvashaktimAna) all powerful. In free state, beyond mAyA, jIva and Brahman are same as both panchamahAbhUta and mAyA are upAdhi-s. Ishvara is endowed with six upAdhi-s called as six qualities. When in duality, until jIva is trapped in panchamahAbhUta (five bodies made from five elements earth, water, etc), we, as jIva-s are ansha (part) of sarva (whole). If we take ‘mind’ into account along with jIva, then each jIva is unique with other i.e. each jIva has unique personality and is different from Ishvara. The reality of being eternally free and one with brahman is different from our day-to-day experience, indicating that we need to make ‘an effort’ to realize truth. While living in dual world, one needs to take refuge in Ishvara and pray to him to raise our consciousness beyond mAyA and merge individuality (feeling of individual identity called sa ego) into totality. Nothing happens without the grace of Ishvara and his mAyA, his spiritual consort, who is our divine compassionate mother.

Why I am not Jiva?

The description of Jiva is given found in Shastras along with it's size. Who is the one who describes Jiva? The observer cannot be the observed.

e.g. If I say that 'this is rose flower', then

I am the knower of 'Rose Flower'

I am different from 'Rose Flower'

Hence I am not 'Rose Flower'.

In the same way if I am the one who is experiencing myself as Jiva, then the witness of Jiva-bhava (जीवभाव) is the one who is 'I' and not the Jiva itself. Then a question arises, 'Who Am I'. Upon enquiring and diving deep within, suddenly the 'I' melts into the source of question 'Who am I' and another 'I-I' spontaneously reveals itself. Even though it is 'I', it is not Ego or Ego associated with Jiva-bhava. IT is a pUrNa-vastu (पूर्ण वस्तु), meaning it is completeness. That is none other than Brahman (ब्रह्म). Only Brahman is the real 'I', the complete 'I' . It is said to be indescribable (अनिर्वचनीय). Hence no one ever has been able to describe it. To describe something, one needs to experience it separately. We do not experience sat or chit or ananda or infiniteness separately. It is our svarupa, our own nature. Rishis made a valiant attempt to describe the indescribable in dual tone for the sake of sAdhaka-s.

Aham 'I' and AhamkAra 'I-ness', 'I am Doer', 'Ego'

The word Aham 'I' is often confused. When we say, Aham, it is just 'I' and not Ego. AhamkAra can be split into two words 'aham' and 'kara', aham means 'I' and kara means 'doer'. Hence the word ahamkAra verily means, 'I am doer'. This difference is not understood by most non-advaitins and hence they wrongly understand the Advaitic interpretation of mahAvAkya-s.

When I say, I am Brahman (aham BrahmAsmi - aham brahma-asmi), then some wrongly take it 'I' as Ego or 'I' as Jiva. For there there is an *a priori* (presumption) that I ma Jiva. Hence they understand that I, the Jiva, becomes Brahman. While Advaita says, I m not Jiva. Hence ask 'Who am I', the answer is 'I' am Brahman. So,

The word 'am' seems to create confusion. It makes us think that the word 'am' indicates 'to become' i.e. it denotes transformation. This would resemble to pariNAma vAda, in which milk turns into curd. While Advaita does not think in the same way. Advaita adopts vivarta vAda. Hence there is no transformation. Only wrong notion is removed.

I ≠ Jiva

I = Brahman

Advaita begins with dvaita and assumes or say presumes that 'I' is wrongly taken for granted as 'body' or 'Jiva'. Hence Advaita asks us to find this 'I'. Lets substitute 'am' in the above mahAvAkya with 'is'. The mahAvAkya becomes

'I' is Brahman

'I am Brahman' may seem to look like upadeshaka vAkya, but in reality it is a state of Self Realization. Put in other words, One realizes that 'I am Brahman'. For sake of understanding, to explain non-advaitins, we can say 'I is Brahman' as this will remove *a priori* and the wrong understanding of transformation.

Atman

Atman is defined in Tatva Bodh as Sat-Chit-Ananda. It is not defined as jiva, but is said to be not different from Brahman. Since advaita proclaims Jiva-Brahman aikya i.e. jiva and Brahman are one, Atman, often translated as Self, and 'I' is considered as infinite, and not different from Brahman.

Relation between Jiva, Ishvara and Brahman

In simple words,

Brahman + Suddha mAyA = Ishvara

Brahman + avidyA mAyA = jIva

Brahman when associates with his power mAyA becomes Ishvara, who is the creator of Universe, but himself is not deluded by his own mAyA and his creation.

Brahman after creating this world, entered into panch mahAbhUta-s, associated with them and forgot his true nature. Thus he became jIva.

Both Suddha mAyA and avidyA mAyA are called as upAdhi-s. If we remove Suddha mAyA from Ishvara, what remains is Brahman. In the same way, if we remove avidyA mAyA, what remains is Brahman. Ishvara, in other words is Brahman with names and forms. Sri VidyAraNya SvamI in his master piece PanchdaSI says that Brahman created this world form his ansh (part) i.e. only a fragment. Hence mAyA is called as eka deSiya (confined to only one region). Rest all is always Brahman.

Ishvara SrUShTI and jIva SrUShTI (ईश्वर सृष्टि, जीव सृष्टि)

Ishvara has created this world and different padArtha-s (objects, पदार्थ). Creation of Ishvara is called as Ishvara SrUShTI (ईश्वर सृष्टि) i.e. God's creation.

Jiva added his own interpretation, attachment (bhAva, भाव) and gave importance to some objects, i.e. likes some objects or person and dislikes other object or person, or may remain neutral. Sri VidyAraNya SvAmI in his panchdaSI gives few examples to give us more clarity.

Ishvara created Jewel say a diamond. One person likes it's possession i.e. values it and develops liking for it, another one is not happy as he is not able to possess one, third one is prefers to remain neutral. The bhAva of possession is jIva-s creation. It is not Ishvara's creation. Ishvara created a padArtha, while a jIva, who is a bhoktA (भोक्ता), added it's own valuation to a non-living object. In this way, jIva will either try to protect it, acquire it or do not care about it. Hence jIva lives in his own world. The valuation of 'diamond being a pricey possession' and adding a bhAva of acquiring it is the creation of jIva and not Ishvara. This is called as jIva SrUShTI (जीव सृष्टि).

Another example given is that of a women. One lady can be a daughter, sister, wife and mother to different person. What Ishvara created is a human being made up of flesh and bones. It is jIva that added bhAva like daughter, sister, wife, etc to it and associated with it. Women is creation of Ishvara, but the attributes of daughter, sister, wife, etc arise in the buddhi and mind of jIva and hence the relations are called as jIva SrUShTI (जीव सृष्टि).

JIva SrUShTI (जीव सृष्टि) is the cause of bondage

jIva SrUShTI (जीव सृष्टि) is the cause of bondage. Ishvara SrUShTI does not cause bondage. What mind attaches to and what Intellect gives a meaning and what Ego says 'this is mine' or 'she is my ...' is the cause of bondage. Hence in advaita, we are taught to neutralize likes and dislikes. To do this we need to have viveka (power of discrimination). Advaita requires 4 qualities, which are considered pre-requisites, since vedanta belongs to the 4th ashram. These qualities are explained later. Advaita heavily depends upon these pre-requisites and asks one to develop them.

It is the association of jIva with a sense of belonging, 'I' and 'mine' which creates rAga (राग, liking) and dveSa (द्वेष, rejection) and desire to acquire them or to avoid them. Fulfilling of desires makes us craves more. It is like adding fuel to fire. While failing to acquire what one wants gives rise to krOdha (क्रोध, anger), which further creates negative emotions in us. The chain reaction begins which is the cause of bondage and entering into the never ending vicious cycle of birth and death.

In this process, jIva acquires desires and keeps thinking about them. On the other hand, jIva also tries to avoid that gives discomfort. We create bank balance to be ready to face adverse situation. In other words, we safe guard ourselves and our loved ones so that we do not have to face sorrow.

Hence, we can say that, jIva tries to avoid dukha (दुःख, sorrow, trouble) and searches for everlasting happiness. There is nothing wrong to desire for happiness. Happiness is our real nature. What is wrong is to search outside in objects and persons, while it is inside us. Hence advaita asks us to detach ourselves from external sense objects, cut down relationships as advaita considers it as a poison and asks one to dive deep within to search for peace and bliss. Realizing our true nature will result in freedom from cycle of birth and death.

Advaita asks us to find out the root cause of all the suffering.

What is the root cause of suffering?

Sages and wise men say that the whole activity began since the Brahman got deluded. Brahman got deluded and forgot his own true nature. Forgetting one's true nature was due to avidyA (अविद्या, ignorance). Knowledge is called as 'vidyA (विद्या)'. Knowledge of one's true nature is called as 'vidyA (विद्या)' or 'Jnana (ज्ञान)'. Brahman entered into body and forgot his nature. Brahman became ignorant.

After entering into body and forgetting one's true nature, Brahman, as jIva, searched for it and in this process, tried to associate itself with Sense objects. In this process, jIva got attached to them and the whole unending cycle began. Hence avidyA is called as root cause of bondage.

Since we all are in dvaita (the world of duality) and we experience it in our daily life, hence advaita starts with duality and ends in non-duality.

Advaita asks one to make efforts to remove avidyA (ignorance) and gain moksha.

moksha (**मोक्ष**, moxa)

Moksha is generally defined as freedom from the cycle of birth and death. By abiding in SELF (Atman) effortlessly one becomes free from cycle of birth and death. This is called as moksha. After mukti or moksha, the body does not fall and a person returns to this world to experience that all Else i verily Brahman. Such a person is called as Jivan-mukta which roughly means to be free while residing in body.

Vivek Chudamani gives another definition of moksha. refer v268-272 and 273-276

verse 268 says It says, vAsanAtAnava.m tat muktim meaning, renunciation of vAsanA (desires) is liberation.

verse 273 concludes that destruction of desires is nothing but liberation

Vivek Chudamani (224 - 226) says that without atma-jnana i.e. without knowledge of SELF, liberation is impossible.

Three Types of vAsanA-s (**वासना**, Desires) and their renunciation

Vivek Chudamani says that there there re three types of desires (vAsanA-s)

verses 271, 272 and 273 say:

deha vAsanA (देह वासना) - attachment with body.

loka vAsanA (लोक वासना) - desire follow what others (a-jnani) do

SAStra vAsanA (शास्त्र वासना) - desire to learn more and more SaStra (scriptures)

dehAnuvartana-tyaktvA - Renounce attachment with body. Too much thinking of body is harmful. Giving undue importance to body other than satisfying it's basic needs does more harm than help. To much attachment with body creates hurdle to rise above body consciousness and hence does not allow one to detach.

lokAnuvartana-tyaktvA - Renounce the habit of copy cat behaviour - to follow what others (a-jnanis) do. Generally people tend to run behind worldly objects. Life is full of reactions. We know how to react but do not know how to act. Our mood depends upon behaviour and reaction of others. This behaviour has to be dropped.

SaStrAnuvartana-tyaktvA - Renounce the desire of learning many shastras. - learning shastras is only done for getting clarity and direction. Shastras have their own limitation. They cannot imprat brahma-jnana. True nature has to be realized.

Another icchara or wish is

1. putrecchA
2. vittecchA
3. lokeShNA

1. putrecchA: desire to have a child or attachment with children
2. vittecchA: desire to earn money or attachment with money i.. living only for money
3. lokeShNA: expectation from people to give you respect. This third icchA (wish) is very difficult to deal with. One can free oneself from women, children and money by being vairAgi (renunciate), but still everybody likes when someone gives you respect, important and reverse you. This icchA is very difficult to uproot.

A mumukshu, the one who wants mukti (liberation) must renounce all these desires and wishes and only think of brahman.

Is Brahman really deluded?

Earlier we had seen that Brahman got deluded. This would give rise to the obvious question - how is it possible that Brahman can get deluded? In other words, if we ask question - 'Is Brahman deluded?'. The answer is both Yes and No. How? for this we will have to understand three levels of truths.

Three Levels of Truths

Three Levels of truths are - vyavahArika satya, prAtibhAsika satya and pAramArthika satya.

VyavahArika Satya

VyavahAra means day-to-day affairs. VyavahArika satya means that which is true or appears to be true in day-to-day life. In other words, it is practical reality.

PrAtibhAsika Satya

PrAtibhAsa means illusion or appearence. PrAtibhAsika satya is the truth which is only true in the dream state. This truth is within mind. During sleep, mind creates another world. Dream world is true for dreamer, but when one is awake, this world disappears without leaving any trace.

PAramArthika Satya

ParamArtha means absolute truth or highest truth. PAramArthika satya means that which remains truth in all states at all times. That which is present everywhere, without beginning or end. There is no abhAva or absence of pAramArthika satya. Hence it is called as absolute truth. Shruti says Brahman is absolute truth.

In generally, we take 2 levels of truth as we are more concerned with waking consciousness. Shri Nithin Sridhar has explain two Levels of truth here in simple way.

Explanation for Brahman getting deluded?

Our AcArya Sri Adi Shankara BhagavadpAda says, from pArmArthika standpoint, Brhaman is never deluded. However, from Standpoint of duality, it is explained to us that Brahman got deluded.

There is no contradiction in both explanation. Upon realizing the absolute truth, one realizes that Brahman was always Brahman and was never deluded. Perhaps if Brahman really got deluded, it will break basic tenets of Advaita which says Brahman is the only Truth and is unchanging, immutable, undivided, formless ultimate reality.

As earlier said, since all sAdhaka-s are in duality and see and experience this world, hence our AcArya has said that our shastra-s explain us two levels of truth. Since we experience bondage and have forgotten out true nature, we have to give this explanation. But upon realization, we say that Brahman is never deluded.

It may be confusing. To simplify things, we can say that - Theories of Creation, Brahman getting deluded, Jiva making efforts for Self Realization and attaining moksha, all are true from the standpoint of empirical truth (vyavahArika satya) only. It is not true from absolute reality (pArmArthika satya). Both these levels are structurally supported and so is forgetfulness. Br. Up. II-iii-1 and II-iii-6 explains two levels of truth and Ch. Up 6:15:1-3 explains us forgetfulness, when Guru advises Svetketu, a disciple, - Thou Art that Brahman, Svetketu', not once, not twice, but nine times.

To further understand and gian clarity, let us take a famous example of clouds veiling (covering) Sun.

Lets say that some layers of clouds veil Sun. Hence we can say that, Sun (Brahman) is veiled by ignorance (clouds). After the clouds move on or are removed from our vision, Sun appears again and we can say that Sun (brahman) is found again. But in reality, we know that Sun can never be veiled by Clouds.

Yet we experienced Sun getting veiled. This experience also cannot be false. But is not the reality either. Hence this falls in the category of mithyA. It is true from empirical standpoint only. Suppose if we travel upwards and move beyond clouds, then sun will always shine. Never was the time when Sun never stopped shining.

The experience of Sun getting veiled was only true from one standpoint. Similarly, Brahman getting deluded, theories of creation, etc are valid only from empirical POV, when one is under ignorance. They are not applicable to Self Realized saint, who has already removed ignorance and entered into non-dual state.

The question can arise - How can mithyA ignorance i.e. illusionary ignorance can result into real knowledge. The answer is that just like the pouncing dream-tiger results in our

waking up, unreal removal of ignorance can give real knowledge and take us beyond the realms of ignorance.

Advaita says that it the association with the body that is the cause of bondage. Hence dis-association is advised. We use the word negation and not destruction. Upon Self Realization, the world is not destroyed, but the world and jiva bhava is negated. i.e. in the state of Jnana, there is no experience of body, mind, intellect, jiva bhava, or this world.

A person can realize the Self and still be in the body. Advaita does not end with Brahma satya, jagat mithyA. There is another mahA vAkya, sarvam khalu-idam Brahma, meaning 'everything else is Brahman'. So when Jnana comes down from state of Nirvikalpa samadhi, one realizes that everything 'else' si also Brahman. i.e. this world is no different than Brahman. Such a State is called as Jivan Mukti.

Jivanmukti and Videha Mukti

Advaita has a concept of Jivan Mukti. One can be eternally free while living in this body. Such a person is called Jivan Mukta. After the body is permanently dropped, one attains Videha mukti. Deha means body. Vi-deha means without body. Hence Vi-deha mukti means liberation without body i.e. be as pure consciousness without attaching to anything.

To a Jnani, There is no difference in the state of Jivan Mukti and Videha Mukti. The only difference is dropping of body. A Jnani already knows that he is not a body and has permanently dropped association with all 5 bodies.

Advaita says that one can be Liberated here and now, in this physical body. Liberation does not come after one leaves physical body. One one knows what happens after one dies. He does not come back to tell us his experience of Mukti. Only a Jivan Mukta can explain the state which is actually inexpressible.

One does not need to drop his body to become liberated. One only needs to disassociated with body and everything that is non-self. When mind is destroyed, one is eternally liberated.

Whom to Surrender?

When it is said that 'I am Brahman', then a question naturally comes, as to whom should I surrender. We have to surrender to the words of Guru and to the Guru himself. Guru is considered as the living power of *Ishvara Gurur Brahma Gurur Vishnu Gurur devo Maheshvara, Gurur Sakshat ParaBrahma tasmayshri Guruve Namah.* In this way, when utmost importance is given to Guru, who represents Ishvara, there is no separate need to surrender to any form of Ishvara. Technically there is no difference between Guru, Ishvara and Brahman.

Why Theory of Advaita is right

Shruti-s describe Brahman in number of verses. We will see how basic concepts of Advaita comply the description or definition of Brahman as given in Shruti-s

- **Brahman is Unchanging .** Hence Brahman cannot change or transform into something else i.e. jiva and jagat.
- **Brahman is indivisible.** Hence Brahman cannot be divided into countless Jiva-s
- **Brahman is beyond 3 guna-s. Hence it has to be attributeless.** Meaning it cannot be perceived by mind
- **Brahman is the only reality (Satya). Brahman is one without second. Brahman is (SASvata) eternal.** Hence there cannot be any other truth or satya. Truth is the one which exists in all three states at all times and is without beginning and without end. Hence anything other than Brahman cannot be eternal. Hence Jiva, Jagat and mAyA cannot be the truth & eternal, hence they cannot be real. So they have to end or cease to exist in the pure state of nirguNa Brahman. Hence it is said that in Jnana Dristhi or in nirvikalp Samadhi, jiva, jagat and mAyA cease to exist.
- **Brahman is nirAkAra.** Hence it is all pervasive. Any name and form has it's limitations no matter how big it is. A concrete form or a definite shape cannot fill each and every gap and hence cannot fill the entire space.

Acceptance of Six Pramanas

Unlike other non-advaita schools, Advaita accepts all 6 pramANa-s as prescribed by mimAmsA of KumArila Bhatta. The six pramANa-s are

"pratyaksa", "anumana", "upamana", "sabda" "arthapatti" and "anupalabdhi".

Four PramANa-s of NyAya are

Pratyaksha = Direct Perception

AnumAna = Inference --> important pramANa of NyAya

Upamana = knowing what is not known by means of comparison with the known (comparison)

Sabda = Verbal testimony, the pronouncements of the Vedas and the words of great men

arthapatti = presumption or indirect assumption

anupalabdhi = by which we come to know a non-existent object (non-apprehension)

For more details about Pramanas, please read Part 13, Nyaya of the book Hindu Dhaarma. First 3 chapters explain us Pramanas. Specifically Chapter #1 and #3 explain six pramanas

Advaita or non-dualism is in agreement with Mimamsa up to a point. It accepts Vedic karma as well as the six pramanas (perceptions or sources of knowledge) defined by Kumarilabhatta. Sankara's non-dualism, Ramanuja's qualified non-dualism, and Madhva's dualism are all Vedantic doctrines and all three are not against Vedic rituals. While non-dualism accepts all the six pramanas of Mimamsa, qualified non-dualism accepts only three- pratyaksa, anumana and the Veda Source: Vedanta and Mimamsa

Six PramANa-s are explained in DharmarAja AdhvarIndra's Vedanta ParibhAshA

Note:

1. *Nyaya has accepted four pramanas - "pratyaksa", "anumana", "upamana" and "sabda"*
2. *PrabhAkara of pUrva mimAmsA has added the 5th - "arthapatti".*
3. *KumArila Bhatta of pUrva mimAmsA has added 6th - "anupalabdhi". All six pramANa-s are accepted by Advaita Vedanta.*

Mimamsa

The Vedas, as we know, contain "vakyas" and "adhyayas". How are we to know their content, their meaning? What must we do to find out their purpose, their message?

The rules according to which the Vedas are to be interpreted are contained in the Mimamsa sastra. If the Vedas are the law, Mimamsa is the law of interpretation. As I said before, when the government enacts a great number of laws doubts arise as to their intention and application. So to interpret these the government enacts another law. Mimamsa is such a law with reference to the Vedas. It formulates certain methods to discover the meaning of the Vedic texts.

Six methods are mentioned: upakarma-upasamhara, abhyasa, apurvata, phala, atharvada, upapatti. According to Mimamsa the meaning, the intent, of the Vedic Mantras may be understood by applying these methods. Source: Determining the Meaning of Vedic Texts

Note: *Methods of Interpreting Veda-s are different from PramANas, which Nyaya and VaiSheshikA accepts. Nyaya and Vaisheshika are Astika or Thiest philosophies.*

Why Brahman is nirAkAra?

Any name has shape and is are bound by time and space. It can be present only at one places at one time. Any shape cannot be all-pervasive i.e. it cannot occupy any all of the space. e.g. a solid object like stone cannot take the shape of a container. Only formless can take any shape e.g. water takes the shape of container. Air which is formless can penetrate and spread over to entire area. Then Atman is subtler than air and space. Hence it cannot be sAkAra. Even Jiva is considered as formless. Jiva does not have any shape.

Jiva is called as shariri i.e. indweller of sharira (body). Jiva is not the body. mAyA is also formless. Hence Brahman can only be nirAkAra.

Without violating the above facts, which are qualities attributed to Brahman, the only theory possible is that of vivarta vAda. The creation has to be explained as as error in perception. Due to false perception, Brahman though undivided, it appears to be divided and appear in multiple forms. Brahman and jiva cannot be separate than Brahman or better said that Brahman in disguise of avidya (ignorance) appears as jiva.

Advaita Vedanta - A Pure Vedantic path

Among all the philosophies which claim to be vedantic, Advaita vedanta is purely based on Vedanta (upanishads), Gita and Brahma Sutra, together called as PrasthAntrayi.

Other philosophies like Vaishnava mata and Shaiva mata have blended Agama-s, which are associated with Temple worship. For example VisisTAdvaita and Dvaita claim to follow PanchrAtra Agama. Agama-s are extension of veda-s and are said to compliment veda-s, but are not veda-s themselves.

Shiddhanta Shaiva have accepted 28 non-vAmachara Shaiva Agama-s and blended them with vedanta along with other independent holy texts like Thirumandiram. Some Shaiva Agama-s like Rudra Yamala Tantra are Tantric in nature. By the word TAntrika, we at once are reminded of black magic, voodoo, sex, etc. This is not true. Though there may be some texts that can be interpreted in a lowly manner like progressing spiritually through sexual union, etc, Tantra-s in general are external rites and rituals, which later on are mixed with internal process and finally one focuses only on internal purification process. What you interpret is according to your own perception and not necessarily what a text say.

Kashmir Shaivism, a beautiful philosophy, is said to blend all Shaiva Mata into one. It ends in non-dual experience, which is called as para-Bhairava state.

Veda-s have imposed certain restrictions on who can read them and who cannot. Advaita too has pre-requisites and certain restriction as it is a part of veda-s. Tantra-s are said to remove these restrictions so that all can practice. They are step by step instructions depending upon the level of consciousness and purity of a sAdhaka (meditator). Kashmir Shaivism believes that Women can achieve para-bhairava state more quickly and easily then men. Kashmir Shaiva, as taught by Swami Laxmanjoo is opwn to all irrespective of caste and gender.

Advaita on the other hand is purely based in vedanta. It belongs to the forth Ashrama - sanyAsa Ashram. For the other three Ashrama-s there are samhitA and BrAhmaNa portion

of veda-s. For vAnaprastha there is AraNyaka, which is first step to make our mind introvert. Hence Upanishads (vedanta) are a part of veda-s. Advaita does not reject veda-s, but considers it as an important step for inner purification.

Unlike other mata-s advaita does not depend upon any non-vedic texts. Those who practice purely vedic patha (path), they do not need to practice or follow any Agama-s says SUta samhitA of Skanda PUrANa. Hence Advaita is said to be pUrNa vedic dharma or pUrNa vedic sampradAya. Hence Advaita is purely vedantic mata.

Uniqueness of Advaita

Common thing about all vedantic schools is that there is one supreme reality. In this sense the term non-dual is applicable to all schools of vedanta.

Other non-dual thiest schools of Vedanta say that

1. (Their form of) Ishawara is supreme, independent and real
2. mAyA is God's eternal power and is real
3. mAyA is dependent upon Ishwara and is eternal.
3. jiva is the creation of Ishwara through mAya.
4. jiva is real adn ternal. jiva retains it's jiva-hood even after Self Realization.
5. Ishwara divides itself into countless jiva-s and plays lIlA (leela / lila).

Non-theist or athiest schools believe:

1. This world was created from prakruti
2. Prakruti is eternal.
3. Jiva is eternal
4. This world and hence jiva is real and a part of prakruti

In all these claims / theories / assumptions / beliefs, it can be noted that

1. There is more than one thing that is Real and Eternal - both jiva and mAyA
2. The supreme reality, Ishwara in this case, who is real and indivisible, divides itself through Yog-mAyA or simply mAyA and that division is real.

Now lets see advaita concepts

1. Brahman is real, indivisible and unchanging
2. mAyA is unreal from POV of supreme reality and is dependent upon Brahman.
3. jiva is unreal and dependent upon Brahman
4. according to atheist school, prakruti is independent.

The uniqueness about advaita is except Brahman, everything else is not real, eternal and independent. In this sense, advaita and truely the only school which supports the truth proclaimed by vedas i.e. 'Truth is one'.

Excellent explanation of read Significance of the name Advaita is given by Sri Swami Chandrashekhar Bharati, late ShankarAcharya of Sringeri Sharada Peetha.

There are different vAda which different philosophical schools have adopted to support their theory of 'creation of world'

vAda-s - Theories of Creation

There are 4 different vAda-s - Arambha vAda, pariNAma vAda, vivartha vAda and ajAta vAda.

Arambha vAda

God is the kartA and he created this universe. Like potter creating pot. Nyaya-vaisheshikA adopt this vAda.

This vAda is for the ones who believe in karma and cannot believe that God does not do any karma. They believe that without karma nothing is possible.

pariNAma vAda

In this something changes into something else. The change is visible and real.

e.g. is milk turning into curd.

sAnkhya Adopt this vAda. They say that Sun which does not do any work but under it's influence we find transformations like water vapourizing into steam, plants growing, etc.

It is for subtle intellect. VisisTadvaita and dvaita adopted this vAda.

Vivarta vAda

This vAda is adopted by Adi Shankara to explain the concept of mAyA as mithyA.

e.g. snake-rope. Snake does not exist but is super imposed on rope. Without rope there is no snake. As one sees rope, snake vanishes without any trace. If it was real, the transformation would have left traces e.g. cloth burned in fire reduces to ash, which is permanent, real and inconvertible back into cloth.

As the mind is purified, one is taken a step further, more closer to reality. sAdhaka keeps moksha as the only goal in life and meditate on supreme brahman, thereby uprooting all other desires except one - I want moksha.

ajAta vAda

Non existence of MAyA and so this world. Only Sat-Chit-Ananda Atman exists - Pure Non-duality experience.

This path is for the ones who are eligible for Self Realization i.e. they have all desires up-rooted except the one - I want moksha. Now this desire also has to be dropped. AshTAvakra Gita talks about this vAda. If bandhan (bondage) is brahti (illusion), then moksha is mahA-brAnti (great illusion).

To make him quit this last desire questions are asked to sAdhAka:

1. Who wants moksha?

2. Who is the one who meditates?

3. Who am I?

If I am Sat-Chit-Ananda then I do not need to sit in meditation and then establish myself in samadhi. Now the effort drops and one becomes free from last desire of moksha. sAdhaka enters into samadhi without making any effort spontaneously (sahaj). that is why it is said that Jnana cannot be obtained by karma, without Jnana there is no mukti (liberation), liberation is here and now (as there is no time lag after one realizes - Who Am I - after the enquiry, one enters into non-dual state and seeking ends here and now - immediately and not after some seconds, minutes or years).

One can become detached with this world and withdraw senses and become and observer, but not enter into samadhi, as one is still observing. hence it is said to drop the process of observation,

GauDapadAcharya adopted this vAda.

The great e.g. is Lord Buddha. He got enlightened when he dropped everything. Please note that he is called as buddha - the enlightened. Bodh means Jnana and not void or zero state. One cannot negate existence of oneself.

mahAvAkya-s

Mahavakyas describe Advaita sthiti i.e. jiva-brahma aikya meaning jiva (Atman) and brahman are one. There are many mahAvAkya-s. There are 1180 shAkhA-s of vedas. Each shAkhA-s have their own upanishads. Hence technically there are 1180 upanishads. Out of 1180, only 220 are said to be extant. Out of 220, 108 are supposed are mentioned in MuktikA upanishad. Out these 4 upanishads belonging to 4 different veda-s are selected i.e. one upanishad from one veda is selected. From these upanishads, 1 sloka or half sloka is selected as mahAvAkyA, which describes jiva-brahma-aikya.

Four Mahavakyas are:

1. प्रज्ञानम् ब्रह्म

Prajñānam brahma

Consciousness is Brahman - Rig Veda, Aitreya Upanishad 3.3

2. अहं ब्रह्मास्मि

Aham brahmāsmi

I am Brahman - Yajur Veda, bruhadAraNyaka (Brihad-araNyaka) Upanishad - 1.4.10

3. तत्वमसि

Tattvamasi - Tat Tvam Asi

That thou art - meaning That (Brahman) is you) - Sama Veda, Chandogya Upanishad - 6.8.7

4. अयमात्मा ब्रह्म

Ayamātmā brahma

This Atman is Brahman - Atharva Veda, Mandukya Upanishad 2)

- *Tat Tvam Asi* is a upadeshaka Mahavakya - You are That (Brahman)
- One meditates with ananya bhava (a+anya = not -different) *'AyamAtmA Brahma'* (Atman is Brahman)
- During meditation, one realizes, *pragyAnama Brahman* i.e. consciousness is Brahman (consciousness is everything, awareness is the key, as it helps one separate oneself 'I' from which is not Self)
- Finally one realizes that *aham BrahmAsmi*, I am Brahman
- After Steadying oneself in this state 'I am Brahman', one sees that *'Sarvam Khalu-idam Brahman'* i.e. everything else is also Brahman, which means that which world is not different from Brahman

After understanding 'What is Advaita' lets see who can live the life according to Advaita.

Is Advaita for everybody?

Advaita is not for everybody.

Bhagavan in Gita says that

क्लेशोऽधिकतरस्तेषामव्यक्तासक्तचेतसाम्।
अव्यक्ता हि गतिर्दुःखं देहवद्भिरवाप्यते।।12.5।।

12.5 Greater is their trouble whose minds are set on the unmanifested; for the goal; the unmanifested, is very hard for the embodied to reach.

The path is difficult because the aspirant has to give up attachment to the body from the very beginning of his spiritual practice.The embodied: Those who identify themselves with

their bodies. Identification with the body is Dehabhimana. The imperishable Brahman is very hard to reach for those who are attached to their bodies. Further, it is extremely difficult to fix the resltess mind on the formless and attributeless Brahman.

Sri Ramana Maharshi in Sri Ramana Gita Chapter 7 says:

Ones who have purified their mind through sadhana (meditation) or by Sattvik Karma in past lives can practice advaita Vedanta. He further says that one who does not give much importance to his body and senses and has no interest in the worldly affairs instead of being surrounded by worldly issues are considered as eligible for Self Enquiry.

Svetasvatara Upanishad says that same thing (6.23) –

यस्य देवे परा भक्तिः यथा देवे तथा गुरौ ।
तस्यैते कथिता ह्यर्थाः प्रकाशन्ते महात्मनः ॥
प्रकाशन्ते महात्मन इति ।6:23।

यस्य For whom देवे to God परा भक्तिः Supreme devotion यथा देवे as to God तथा So गुरौ To the Master ।

तस्यैते To that [high souled / pure mind] one कथिता expounded ह्यर्थाः these truths प्रकाशन्ते shine महात्मनः to that high souled॥ प्रकाशन्ते महात्मन इति shine as High Soul indeed.

These truths, when taught, shine forth only in that high-souled one / pure mind who has Supreme Devotion to God, and an equal degree of devotion the Spiritual Master. They shine forth in that High-Souled one only.

Bhagavan in Gita says

मनुष्याणां सहस्रेषु कश्चिद्यतति सिध्दये।
यततामपि सिध्दानां कश्चिन्मां वेत्ति तत्त्वतः।।7.3।।

manuṣyāṇāṅ sahasrēṣu kaścidyatati sidhdayē.
yatatāmapi sidhdānāṅ kaścinmāṅ vētti tattvataḥ..7.3..

7.3 Among thousands of men, one perchance strives for perfection; even among those successful strivers, only one perchance knows Me in essence (tatva).

Note: Here, bhagavan says 'knows' and not 'sees'. Also note that knows 'Me' in essence (tatva).

This verse is connected with 7:19, which is explained in the section " 'I' or 'Me' can be taken as 'Brahman' "

संन्यासस्तु महाबाहो दुःखमाप्तुमयोगतः।
योगयुक्तो मुनिर्ब्रह्म नचिरेणाधिगच्छति।।5.6।।

saṅnyāsastu mahābāhō duḥkhamāptumayōgataḥ.
yōgayuktō munirbrahma nacirēṇādhigacchati..5.6..

5.6 But, O mighty-armed one, renunciation is hard to attain without (Karma-) yoga. The meditative man equipped with yoga attains Brahman without delay.

Uddhava Gita says the same (6.22)

यद्यनीशो धारयितुं नमो ब्रह्मणि निश्चलम् ।
मयि सर्वाणि कर्मणि निरपेक्षः समाचर ॥ २२ ॥

6.22 If thou art unable to hold the mind steady on the Brahman, then perform all actions without caring for the results, giving them up unto me.

Verses 1 to 22of Chapter 6 talk about Jnana. Next verses are for bhakti.

According to Shastras, Brahma Vidya cannot be given to the one who is not a pure mind or does not have subtle intellect. Hence Bhagavan has given us two paths. They are described by Shri Nithin Sridhar here

Who can teach Brahma-Vidya?

Brahman or (Sat-Chit-Ananda) Atman can alone impart knowledge about itself. This can be found in Katha Upanishad, which is a discourse between Nachiketas and Yamadev, who thoroughly tests Nachiketas before imparting Brahma-Vidya. Some verses are quoted below, more can be found here.

Blind Leading Blind

2.5 The deluded staying in illusion thinking themselves to be enlightened go in circles faltering and floundering like sightless-men led by a sightless one.

Brahma Jnana is difficult to grasp and teach

2.7 It is not possible for many to hear about it (Brahman) and even having heard many do not understand. The teacher must be a skilful one and the pupil should be sharp in grasp. The knower is a wonderful person instructed by the adept.

Brahman is beyond speech and arguments i.e. mind and intellect

2.8 This principle (Brahman) is not understood by pondering in different ways or being taught by one of low ability. There is no other way than being taught by one of unparalleled ability and it transcends all arguments and is subtlest of subtle.

2.9 This knowledge is not attainable by logical reasoning / (Self) Enquiry. It is of easy comprehension only when instructed by another. O! Dearest one! O! Nachiketa! let there be seekers like you! You are truly resolved in your desire.

Advaitins never compare capacity of Jnani with avatAra

Advaita does not say 'I Am God' in the sense that - I am Lord Krishna, Lord Rama, Lord Shiva and I can do whatever they can do and can reproduce their supernatural powers and abilities. This is the wrong notion that many people think. Advaita talks about NirGuna Brahman which does not do anything and is at peace. To better understand, we can use word, 'consciousness or awareness. i.e. Consciousness Am I, Awareness Am I. Also note that this 'I' is not Ego or representing Body (sarira bhAva / deha bhAva). It is pure consciousness. But a person who does not consider himself as nirakAra find it difficult to consider Brahman / God as nirAkAra. For them whose consciousness is strongly clinged to body, sAkAra upAsanA is always a better option. After mind is purified, and God gives them experience of detachment and orders them to learn Advaita, one can shift to Advaita. If the prakruti is emotional, then better continue sAkAra upasanA, as emotional characters can progress faster in sAkAra upAsanA then in nirAkAra upAsanA no matter how much intelligent they are, a person lives by mind and not by intellect. Even highly intelligent people have problems with co-workers and even their life partners. They divorce their wives. They are not free from bias and have attachment with someone or something. 'Intelligent' from spiritual POV means subtle intellect that understands and grasps non-dual concepts or ultimate truth. It is not concerned with by-hearting and photographic memory, though they can be an asset for the one who is destined to be an AchArya. Pure mind is better word to avoid this confusion.

If you compare the capacity of any avatAra, then is is not worth comparing. But from POV of tatva Jnana, both are same. An avatAra can give moksha to many more people as compared to a Jnani.

Sri Ramakrishna says a Jnani is like a wooden log upon which 2-3 people can hold on to an cross ocean of samsAra, but an avatAra is like a big raft upon which many many people can sit and cross ocean of samsAra.

Advaita asks one to rise above dvaita

Katho Upanishad (I.3.14) says

UtthishThatha, jAgrata, prApya varAn nibodhata

Kshurasya dhArA nishitA duratyatA

durgam pathastat kavayo vadanti.

Arise, awake, receive guidance from the best preceptors
For the path is like a razor's edge
- dark, beset with obstacles, difficult to tread,
so the experienced (who have travelled the path), say.

OR

Arise, awake from the slumber of Avidya, ignorance; Realize that Atman having approached the exalted teachers; the path is indeed difficult to cross and hard to tread,like the sharp edge of a razor

Even though we talk about Advaita Sthiti as final, mumukshu (seeker) is not in advaita sthiti. He/she is in dvaita. For the ones whose time has come to practice advaita i.e. mind is purified, are asked to rise above dvaita. This is done by doing khandan (negation) of dvaita. For the ones whose mind is still impure, and Guru thinks he will not be able to absorb tatva Jnana, mental purification is advised. This includes karma kand for those who have zeel and spirit of doing work and bhakti yog for stabilizing mind and developing faith (bhava) in God. So advait does not reject Dvaita, but considers it important step for mental purification. To encourage a disciple or devotee in any one of the marg - karma or bhakti, their glories are sung, so that mind accepts it easily and devotee practices it wholeheartedly.

Khandan is done from positive standpoint, so that sadhaka can rise above dvaita. There is no hatred. This is the reason why one should qualify for receiving Jnana, else it is disaster waiting to happen.

More more details, please visit: Journey of Advaita Vedantin

sAdhana CatuShTa varNana (four qualities to practice advaita)

Vivek Chudamani (choodamani) says that four sadhans (qualities) are necessary / required for one to progress in advaita. (sAdhana chatusta varNana).

1. Vivek - discrimination between Real and Unreal. i.e. only Atman, Brahman is real, everything else is unreal

2. Vairagya - dispassion in society (worldly matters)

3. Shatsampatti (6 values)

a. Sham – Control over mind

b. Dam – Control over 5 senses

c. Uprati – Saturation point (control over mins and saturation brings the saturation of slinging or attachment in any worldly attachment)

d. Titiskha – To stay neutral in favourable and unfavourable circumstances

e. Shraddha – Faith in Yourself (I am doing nothing wrong in practicing this path), Guru, God and Shastras.

f. Samadhan – To stay focused on the practice (one-pointedness like that of tiger).

4. Mumukshatva – Burning desire for liberation.

Once you have Vivek and Vairagya along with firm determination for liberation, all other qualities gradually develop within. Regular prayers and surrender to God also help a lot. Being prepared to leave everything for SELF realization is an asset.

Advaita is for Purified minds and with subtle intellects.

For More details, please visit What is Advaita Vedanta? Can it be applied in today's Practical Life? (External Link to Indiaspirituality Blog)

You can also visit Advaita FAQs (External Link) and Advaita - Kamkoti Mandali (External Link)

Snake- Rope Analogy - A perfect example to explain Advaita

Suppose you enter into a dark room and suddenly see a snake, your natural or spontaneous reaction will be to either run away or to grab it for food or for earning. So there are 2 things -

1. To run away or

2. To run towards

snake.

You switch on the light and immediately (without any delay), you see that it is just a Rope. Now the the 'running' is over. There is peace. This means mind has 2 dimensions. To give or take, to accept or select and to reject. Advaita teaches to go beyond mind into the third dimension of stillness. To go beyond duality.

Snake was super imposed upon Rope by false perception. It was an illusion.

Snake seemed truth but was never a truth.

Snake did not last for ever. It was not permanent.

Snake vanished without any trace and without any delay.

Snake did not exist beyond rope.

Snake cannot exist with rope.

Snake is dependent upon rope for it's existence

Snake cannot exist without rope. So Rope is it's AdhAra (support), the substratum, base upon which snake rested.

Rope can exist without snake.

Now, replace *'Snake'* by *'Maya'* and *'Rope'* by *'Brahman'* in above para.

Maya was super imposed upon Brahman by false perception. It was an illusion.

Maya seemed truth but was never a truth.

Maya did not last for ever. It was not permanent.

Maya vanished without any trace and without any delay.

Maya did not exist beyond Brahman.

Maya cannot exist with Brahman.

Maya is dependent upon Brahman for it's existence

Maya cannot exist without Brahman. So, Brahman is it's AdhAra (support), the substratum, base upon which snake rested.

Brahman can exist without Maya.

In the same way verses in Gita and other shastras can be explained by Snake-Rope Analogy

Snake was where ever there was rope, but not beyond it.

Snake was inside rope and rope was inside snake

Snake was inside rope, but rope was not inside snake

Rope was never inside snake and snake was not inside rope.

Snake rested on Rope. Rope is the substratum upon which snake rested.

Snake never existed.

Snake was inside rope and rope was inside snake -->

Rope was never inside snake ans snake was not inside rope. --> In reality, rope never existed. From the standpoint of reality i.e. after realizing true nature of Self, one can say that, Snake is not inside rope and rope is not inside snake.

Snake never existed --> ajaata or ajaati vAda, meaning mAyA never existed (in reality). This statement is being said from Atma-Sthiti (state of Jnana) and not from Practical Standpoint.

Now reflect on the following slokas (verses) from Bhagavad Gita

मया ततमिदं सर्वं जगदव्यक्तमूर्तिना।
मत्स्थानि सर्वभूतानि न चाहं तेष्ववस्थितः।।9.4।।

mayā tatamidaṅ sarvaṅ jagadavyaktamūrtinā.
matsthāni sarvabhūtāni na cāhaṅ tēṣvavasthitaḥ..9.4..

9.4 All this world is pervaded by Me in My unmanifest aspect (nirgina Brahman); all beings exist in Me, but I do not dwell in them.

--> Snake was where ever there was rope, but not beyond it.

--> Snake was inside rope, but rope was not inside snake

न च मत्स्थानि भूतानि पश्य मे योगमैश्वरम्।
भूतभृन्न च भूतस्थो ममात्मा भूतभावनः।।9.5।।

na ca matsthāni bhūtāni paśya mē yōgamaiśvaram.
bhūtabhṛnna ca bhūtasthō mamātmā bhūtabhāvanaḥ..9.5..

9.5 Nor do beings exist in Me (in reality); behold My divine Yoga, supporting all beings, but not dwelling in them, is My Self, the efficient cause of beings.

--> Rope was never inside snake and snake was not inside rope.

यथाऽऽकाशस्थितो नित्यं वायुः सर्वत्रगो महान्।
तथा सर्वाणि भूतानि मत्स्थानीत्युपधारय।।9.6।।

yathā..kāśasthitō nityaṅ vāyuḥ sarvatragō mahān.
tathā sarvāṇi bhūtāni matsthānītyupadhāraya..9.6..

9.6 As the mighty wind, moving everywhere, rests always in the ether, even so, know thou that all beings rest in Me.

--> Snake rested on Rope. Rope is the substratum upon which snake rested.

TruNa-Jantu NyAya and Keet-Bramar NyAya

1. Truna-Jantu Nyaya (Caterpillar law)

Caterpillar is some 16 legs. So when it wants to move from one branch to another, it will branch fetch hold of another branch and grab it with it's front legs and only after fetching it, it leave older branch so shift to new branch.

This can be interpreted like, at the time of death, predominant desires decide our future birth and only when the decision is made new body is given to soul.

2. Keet-Bramar Nyaya

keet is an insect which bhamari catches and cages inside mud with holes to breath and feed and to bite. After being trapped, that insect (sorry I do not know english name) constantly thinks of bhamri that it will come and bite it. Finally it becomes bhamri.

So by thinking of brahman, one becomes brahman.

Subtle Points

Whether you accept it or not, you are under the influence of maya.

So you will have to do a Atma-Khoj - **Who Am I?**

In the statement - **I am That**

That is Already Brahman

The Statement - I AM That, will only become true if I = THAT

I represents individuality. Ego keeps which I alive and wants to sustain individuality.

I can be = ego, mind, body, sukshma sharita, jiva.

In, I AM That, **AM** is the one that holds the key. It shows the process and also makes the statement as Non-Dual.

If you replace 'AM' by 'AM NOT' then the whole meaning changes.

So I = THAT only when you know the Real 'I' or your true nature. But you are in duality. Just assuming does not help. So you have to ask 'Who AM I'. It is a khoj and after asking the questioning, i.e. Nidhidhyasana, Thoughts and doubts ceases, they dissolve into source. You have to find the source of thoughts, breath, or mantra. That happens by awareness. By being Aware you are separated from Thoughts, not be being involving in thoughts. You will have to be de-focused by being aware. Anyways, that's all technical. But just a repetition 'Who Am I' will not help.

Keet-Bramar Nyaya says that you will have to do chintan and manan (thinking and contemplation) and not repetition. It is basically Antar-Khoj (diving deep within).

Imagine a vast endless milky ocean (divine ocean of energy). Entire Ocean is Maya.

Brahman is upon which this Maya rests and is insuperable.

The difference between Jiva and Ishwara is that while Ishwara can take any form anywhere at will and can also again merge into Brahman at will, Jiva is bound and influenced by Maya.

Both Ishwara and Jiva have 'UpAdhis'. Ishwara takes AdhAra of 'Vidha Maya', the entire

cosmos and is always aware of it's true nature i.e. Brahman. Remember that one rises above Maya by being aware or by knowing 'who am I' i.e. Being Brahman. Ishwara is always aware that he is 'Brahman'. That is why he is called Maya-Pati, swami or controller of Maya. Be also knows that Maya is the shakti of Brahman and cannot be separated from it like fire and it's warmth.

Bhagavan in Gita gives Jnana to Arjun. Since Gita is essence of Upanishads, which talks of Brahma-Jnana, so Bhagavan Krushna also gives Brahma-Jnana to Arjun. Only a realized soul can give Brahma-Jnani. Only Jnani can give Jnana-Updesha. So Bhagavan is also SELF Realized. If you have noticed, in Gita it's Just Bhagavan, making it universal. Instead of Being Bhagavan, the substratum of entire universe, he does not take credit. He humbly says I am taking everything from Upanishads, which are created by Rishis, or simply I am quoting from Shastras, even though everything origins or emerges and dies (udbhava and laya) in God. So even bhagavan Krushna considers Shastras as authentic and there is not even a trace of Ego, no 'I' in Bhagavan. Also note that Gita does not teach from Only one standpoint.

Coming back, Ishwara takes Adhara of Vidha Maya and Jiva takes Adhara of Panch-Mahabhuta. Ishwara is sarve-buddhiman and Jiva is alpa-buddhiman, bound by Maya, and having a feeling of seperateness of and so 'I'. Since Jiva and everything is inside Maya and is created from Maya, it also contains all tree Gunas – Satva, Rajas and Tamas. It is not separate from Maya and so not separate from Ishwara. But it is the feeling of separateness due to avidya (ignorance) and Ahamkara (Ego) that we say that 'I am Part of the whole' Again, Consider an Ocean (inverted on top and form which two branches come out – just for visualization - Jiva and God)

So the thing that separates Ishwara and Jiva is knowledge that 'I Am Brahman' If you remove Vidha Maya from Ishwara and you remove Panch-Mahabhuta from Jiva, what is left is pure Brahman. That is why when in Jnana, one says, 'I am Brahman'. This does not mean that he can do same miracles that Krushna or other gods do, having siddhis (supernatural powers) entirely depends upon Grace of God and devas (demi-Gods).

Ishwara does not depend upon anything 'Else' for creation of universe

It is said that this world or universe was created from the mind of Lord Brahman by his kalpanA (thought or imagination)

To make anything who will require 2 things – Material needed for creation and knowledge (to make or create that particular thing).

Ishwara knows what to make (knowledge) and also has tools and materials to make things (Maya). Ishwara does not need anything outside him.

I recall an example of spider.

Spider knows how to make 'Jala' (Web) and also has tools (saliva) to make it. Spider does not need anything extra from outside to create web i.e. Nor knowledge or material. Similarly, Ishwara is both material cause and efficient cause.

Three Paths

Sri Ramana Maharshi says there are 3 margas

Sri Ramana Maharshi, in Sri Ramana Gita says, SELF can be realized by 3 paths

1. MaargaNa: Vichar Marg, Self Enquiry, Jnana Marg

2. Majjan: To dive within (dictionary meaning). i.e. To merge, dissolve yourself in the source of Mantra. Bhakti Marg

3. PraaNa Rodh: To stop breath (dictionary meaning). To observe, control and slow down the breath. i.e. Breath Control. Yog (Raja Yog)

Source: Ramana Gita. Article: Three paths

Laya and Nasha are different. Laya means to be one with god or merging with God. But after spending some time in samadhi, mind again rises, as it is not dead, just sleeping, and with it rises the samsara. Again one enters into samadhi and mind sleeps, again it rises and so is duality. By repeatedly entering into samadhi, mind is emptied and destroyed. Now the mind does not rise again. There is no need to mediate. A person stays in nirvikalp samadhi for 21 days. After that the contact with body is permenetaly dropped. Sri Ramakrishna says only avatar can comes back again into body after 21 days. Most people do not return, but a select few, chosen by God returns from samadhi to do work of God. After that it's all God, not that person. He is Jivan Mukta. Such persons are very rare. My prostrations to Jivan Muktas who are Jnani Bhaktas, Atman of Krushna itself.

In Jnana marg, from beginning, you do not think of anything else than Brahman. That is why Shankaracharya has called Maya as 'Mithya'

It is illusion. Mithya means that one that does not exist but still you feel it.

Remember Snake and Rope analogy. Upon seeing snake, you either tried to run away or towards it. So till you are in Maya give-n-take continues. Only after you realize Brahman, you can say (in Atma Sthiti)) that 'I am Brahman' and that Maya is illusion. It is a statement said from the state of SELF Realization.

Practically all sadhakas, one does feel separateness The approach is different in all paths. In Dvaita after you have divine vision of God, all your wishes are up-rooted as you have reached your destination. You are entirely surrendered to God, though you have separate existence. It will depends upon God to give you what is best for you. As Bhagavan in Gita says , at the time of death, if you take his name (Krushna or meditate on Brahman), then there is no second birth.

ajAta vAda: Moksha - a mahabranti (great illusion)

a-jaata

not-born

ajAta means 'not born'

Advaita accepts maayaa, but ajaata vaada says that there is nothing like maya. It rejects maya. ajaata vaada talks from the graveyard of karma and duality.

CAUTION: This is only for very advanced sadhakas.

When God has up-rooted all the desires except one - I want Moksha, even this desires - I want Moksha, produces mental agitation. It is time to even renounce this desire. This is where ajAta vAd comes into play, not before. Now the questions are bombarded which will ocmpletely shatter anything that is holding in the way. Questions like, who is the meditator?. IF bandha (bondage) is brAnti (illusion), then moksha (liberation) is mahAbrAntI (great illusion).

I will not elaborate much, as it may do more harm that help if wrongly understood. All I can say is that finally even this desire moksha has to be renounced. Perfect e.g. is that of Lord Buddha. He meditated till the extreme, but when he left everything, even the desire for moksha, he was enlightened.

For more details, please visit ajAti vAda (external link)

Vachyartha and Laxyartha

Every statement has Vaachyartha (apparent / literal meaning) and lakshyaartha (destination)

I will give an e.g given by Swami Sukhbodhananda in one of his discourses:

He (Swamiji) pointed to Krishna idol and said ‘This is Krishna’.

Now, the pointed finger is vaachyaartha, which one has to drop. It is used for just giving in the direction. Pointed finger is not the destination. The destination (lakshya) is the idol of Krishna. If you keep looking at pointed finger, can you look at Krishna? no. If you look at shadow, can you look at Sun? No.

Finger has to be dropped. It was never the destination. But since we were not able to find krishna or to make it easier to find krishna, the finger is pointed. After one moves attention to Krishna, the finger is dropped. No more attention is given to finger, which is just a pointer and not destination. Krushna is the only center of focus or attention. It is the only thing that one should care.

From this Swamiji's e.g. , I can extend that:

Finger is maya and idol of krushna is brahman.

Shastras teach us in a language which looks like dual. This is because, a sadhaka is always living in duality. So it is easy to talk from POV (Point Of View) of sadhaka.

Another e.g. Will take things more clear:

Imagine that you are going from place A to place B. In between there is a river and you do not know to swim. So you take aadharaa (support) of boat. Boat has advantage that it will not sink itself and you. But after reaching boat, do you keep sitting in boat or move ahead? definitely move ahead.

Here, boat is maya, it is a tool and not a destination.

Earlier we had concluded that Advaita does not give importance to maaya.

But we have heard so much about mAyA (maayaa). Why is mAyA talked too much?

Since matured sadhakas are very rare and are generally in isolation and maun cannot be taught. You will have to feel it, it is not much focused. Teaching via maun is very supreme, as in the case of Bhagavan DakshaNaamurty, but very few can grasp it. It also requires presence of a Realized Guru. Most of the sadhakas are beginners and for them maayaa is taught. It's the newer ones that makes noise and so we find more talks about maayaa, where it is given importance. So initially to withdraw the senses, one is constantly reminded of maayaa, one should stay away from worldly objects, mentally disconnect from friends, family members, avoid them as poisons, avoid objects of senses as poison, etc. This produces vivek yukta vairagya. Once the mind becomes 100 % introvert, it's time to think of brahman and nothing else. Guru makes extrovert mind introvert, and Ishwara establishes introvert mind into heart (Atman, Brahman, source of everything – breath, mantra, thoughts and this world). No more bombarding of withdrawing of senses et al is done.

Subtle points for sincere advaita meditators.

If you keep looking at thoughts, you can say that you are detached from them, but still you keep seeing them. The point is not ot keeping looking at thoughts and images, but to move beyond into their source. If you ar chanting OM, then you will have to neglect thoughts AND shift your attention to OM and then move to it's source to be one with Brahman.

Mature sadhaka has no interest in this world and can neglect the influence of maya (I do not say he is above maya), worldly thoughts do not enter into his mind. In such a case, isolation is highly recommended. Now the paatra (vessel) is free from hole and there is no further dumping of thoughts of day-2-day life. Such a matured sadhaka will only go to source of mantra OM, and enter into samadhi. Now, since there is no more dumping in mind, past thoughts, vasanas and even vasanas from past life / lives may come out during meditation and are up-rooted. Remember, thoughts are not coming, they are going. So let them go. Do not stop them from going.

One has to change the direction of sight, turn opposite 180 degrees and you will see the sun.

So a person after neglecting maya is not a Jnani. He becomes a Jnani when he merges into Brahman / source. Mind melts into source heart, / Atman / Brahman by a-anya bhava (ananya bhava) bhakti. i.e. Not different i.e. I am not different from Brahman.

If you keep looking at thoughts even for hours, you can say that you are detached, but actually nothing happens, progress stops. Infact one can develop a habit of observing thoughts and waiting for next to come. It is not good. One has to move beyond thoughts, mind and so maya. Not by observing thoughts or considering this world as illusion, but by moving on to the source of thoughts or mantra (OM), one can be in non-dual state. One has to dive deep within to gather the pearls of wisdom.

Adi Shankara in Vivekchudamani has sung many verses on Brahmatatvamasi bhavayaatmani meaning, have brahman bhaavanaa i.e. (Constantly think of brahman. (10 Slokas sloka no 254 - 263 talk about contemplating on brahman and not maayaa) - keet-brahar nyaaya

Jaati neeti kula gotra dooragam
naama roopa guna dosha varjitam!
Desha kaala vishayaativarti yad
Brahma tatwamasi bhaavayaatmani!! (254)

254. That which is beyond caste and creed, family and lineage; devoid of name and form, merit and demerit; transcending space, time and sense-object – that Brahman art thou, meditate on this in thy mind.

http://www.sankaracharya.org/vivekachudamani3.php#1

Same is said in Atma shatakam / nirvANa shatak

The gist is

1. extrovert mind → introvert mind → development of vairagya with the help of maayaa

2. introvert mind to contemplate on brahman with a-anya bhakti (a = not, anya = different) BG 12:6 (for sAkAr upAsanA, refer 8:14 - ananyachetA us translated as single-pointed devotion. It can also be interpreted as continuously thinking - 'I am brahman')

3. Mano laya. No need to think on maayaa. Establish oneself on Atman sthiti (Brahma sthiti) and try to remain in it. Nirvikalp samadhi.

4. Mano naasha → ajaata vaada → Destruction of mind. Sahaj samadhi.

5. Jivan mukta → after meditation is over, no dvaita darshan. Jagat is Brahman itself (sarvam khalu-idam brahman)

But why is maayaa first talked about and then at other place it's existence is negated i.e. From viverta-vaada to ajaata vaad? This is the style of traditional teaching.

Upadeshas are given from AdhikAra bheda

Another way of traditional teaching is to accept the existence and later on negate it. This can be seen in Vivek Chudamani and in Gita.

Initially, one has practical approach and sees even Jnani is suffering for body pains. So to explain it (to un-ripe, beginners), Shankaracharya says that Prarabhdha is the reason. He goes on explaining logically that:

Suppose you are hunting a lion, and shoot an arrow. After releasing arrow, if such an opinion arises in buddhi that it is gau (cow) and not Lion, then nothing can be done. Arrow has already left the bow. similarly, Prarabhdha is like this arrow already on travel and will hit the target with fullforce (V.C. 452).

Later on it is said that: In the One Reality, the concept of the universe is a mere fancy. How can there be any diversity in the Changeless, the Formless, the Absolute? (400)

For more Refer Vivek Chudamani (Choodamani) verses 441 – 464 and verses 398-406

Shankaracharya also explains similar to jnAnAgni sarva karmANii, bhasmasAt krute tathA.

You will find same trend in Gita

न हि कश्चित्क्षणमपि जातु तिष्ठत्यकर्मकृत्।
कार्यते ह्यवशः कर्म सर्वः प्रकृतिजैर्गुणैः।।3.5।।

3.5 Because, no one ever remains even for a moment without doing work. For all are made to work under compulsion by the gunas born of Nature.

यथैधांसि समिद्धोऽग्निर्भस्मसात्कुरुतेऽर्जुन।
ज्ञानाग्निः सर्वकर्माणि भस्मसात्कुरुते तथा।।4.37।।

4.37 Just as burning fire turns fuel to ashes, O Arjuna, so does the fire of knowledge turn all Karma to ashes.

To a matured sadhaka, shastras say that all karmas are destroyed. All means prArabhdha, AgAmi and sanchit. So even prArabhdha is destroyed. Gita also says that one cannot be free from any karma and so one should practice nitya karmas.

Upadeshas are said from adhikAra bheda.

Refer BG 4:36 - 4:38, which sings the glories of Jnana.

This unique method is called adhyAropa apavAda. It was rediscovered by Revered Swami Sacchidanandendra Saraswati.

adhyAropa apavAda - Only Consistent Traditional Teaching of Adi Shankara BhagavadpAda

adhyAropa apavAda is a unique traditional method of teaching rediscovered by Swami Sacchidanandendra Saraswati,. Swamiji observed that this method of teaching was adopted by Shankara BhagavadpAda from his Gita BhasSya in 13.13.

According to this method, first super imposition on Self is mentioned and later on superimposition is negated. According to Swami ji, this method is consistent and is found in Upanishads, Gita and Brahma Sutra.

A separate page has been dedicated to explain this unique method of teaching taking help of Shankara Bhasya.

Please visit adhyAropa apavAda - A Consistent Traditional Teaching

Lets move ahead. Bhagavan in Gita says that Ishwara is neutral.

Ishwara is Neutral says Gita

Nirguna Brahman is formless and is stable, substratum of entire universe. It does not do any work of creation, sustenance and destruction. . Brahman along with maya becomes Ishwara. Bhagavan is maya pati and has upAdhi of maya. Bhagavan or ishrawa has 6 qaualities (ipaadhis). Nirguna Brahman is neutral. Also bhagavan is neutral when it comes to accepting sins and merits.

नादत्ते कस्यचित्पापं न चैव सुकृतं विभुः।
अज्ञानेनावृतं ज्ञानं तेन मुह्यन्ति जन्तवः।।5.15।।

5.15 The Omnipresent neither accepts anybody's sin nor even virtue. Knowledge remains covered by ignorance. Thereby the creatures become deluded.

Statements are made from different POV considering the mindset of questioner:

sarira bhAva, jiva bhAva and Atma bhAva

Sri Ramakrishna says,

Once Sri Rama asked Hanuman how he looked at him.

Hanuman Replied:

As a body, I am your das (servant) and you are my lord (master, prabhu)
As a jiva, I am ansha (part) and you are whole (purNa)
but from Tatva Jnana, hey RAma, I am you and you are me. We are not different.

Advaita talks from this third POV - Atma bhAva and not jiva bhava.

In advaita, there is no experiencer. So if you say that 'I am experiencing unity' , it is not ultimate state - advaita. You are still experiencing something, be it peace, bliss or oneness. You may be in visistadvaita, but it is not advaita.

Krishna taught both dvaita and advaita.

त्रिभिर्गुणमयैर्भावैरेभिः सर्वमिदं जगत्।
मोहितं नाभिजानाति मामेभ्यः परमव्ययम्।।7.13।।

Translation

7.13 All this world, deluded as it is by these three things made of the gunas (qualities), does not know Me who am transcendental to these and undecaying.

Adi Shankara's commentary

7.13 Sarvam, all; idam, this; jagat, world, the aggregate of creatures; mohitam, deluded as it is-made to have indiscrimination; ebhih, by these; aforesaid tribhih, three; bhavaih, things, in the forms of attachment, repulsion, delusion, etc; and gunamayaih, made of the gunas, of the transformations of the gunas; na abhijanati, does not know; mam, Me; who am param, transcendental to, distinct, different; ebhyah, from these gunas as referred to above; and am avyayam, undecaying, i.e. free from all (the six kinds of) changes in things, viz birth etc. See note on p.38.-Tr.How, again, do they cross over this divine Maya of Visnu, constituted by the three gunas? That is being stated:

अव्यक्तं व्यक्तिमापन्नं मन्यन्ते मामबुध्दयः।
परं भावमजानन्तो ममाव्ययमनुत्तमम्।।7.24।।

Translation

7.24 The foolish think of Me, the Unmanifest, as having manifestation, knowing not My higher, immutable and most excellent nature. i.e. they think of me as a person with body.

Hindi Translation by Swami Ramsukhdasji Maharaj:

बुद्धिहीन मनुष्य मेरे सर्वश्रेष्ठ अविनाशी परमभावको न जानते हुए अव्यक्त (मन-इन्द्रियोंसे पर) मुझ सच्चिदानन्दघन परमात्माको मनुष्यकी तरह ही शरीर धारण करनेवाला मानते हैं ।।7.24।।

Adi Shankara's commentary

7.24 Abuddhayah, the unintelligent, the non-discriminating ones; ajanantah, unaware; mama, of My; param, supreme; bhavam, state, My reality as the supreme Self; which is avyayam, immutable, undecaying; and anuttanam, unsurpassable; manyante, think; mam, of Me; as avyaktam, the unmanifest, the invisible; apannam, that has become; vyaktim, manifest, visible, at present At present, after being embodied as an Incarnation.-though I am the ever well-known God. They think so because they are unaware of My reality. This is the idea.What is the reason for their ignorance? This is being stated:

नाहं प्रकाशः सर्वस्य योगमायासमावृतः।
मूढोऽयं नाभिजानाति लोको मामजमव्ययम्।।7.25।।

Translation

7.25 Being enveloped by yoga-maya, I do not become manifest to all. This deluded world does not know Me who am birthless and undecaying.

Adi Shankara's commentary

7.25 Yoga-maya-samavrtah, being enveloped by yoga-maya-Yoga means the combination, the coming together, of the (three) gunas; that (combination) is itself maya, yoga-maya; being enveloped, i.e. veiled, by that yoga-maya; aham, I; na prakasah, do not become manifest; sarvasya, to all, to the world. The idea is that I become manifest only to some devotees of Mine. For this very reason, ayam, this; mudhah, deluded; lokah, world; na abhijanati, does not know; mam, Me; who am ajam, birthless; and avyayam, undecaying. In verse 13 the reason for the non-realization of the supreme, unqualified Brahman was stated. The present verse states the reason for the non-realization of the qualified Brahman.'That yoga-maya, because of My being covered by which the world does not know Me- that yoga-maya, since it belongs to Me, does not obstruct the knowlege of Me who am God, the possessor of maya, just as the magic of any other magician does not cover his knowledge.' Since this is so, therefore-

Krishna was also a tyAgi and is also called as yogeSwara. Krishna showed other ways to reach him. Das bhava is not to only bhava to worship him and that you need be afraid of him. Hence Krishna is called a Jagat Guru. My prostrations and salutations to Jagat Guru Bhagavan Krishna.

There are two types of bhakti-s. This is explained by Shri Nithin Sridhar here

Both sides of coin has to be understood.

A jnani experiences niivikalp samadhi. But it is not over, as mind again rises from the dead (mano laya) and one enters into dvaita. But by repeated entering into samadhi, mind, which is nothing but thoughts and vasanas, is gradually destroyed (mano nasha). Now there is no mind. Mind of Jnani is brahman itself says Sri Ramana Maharshi. After one wakes from meditates or completes meditation, one sees that this world is also Brahman and not maya. He sees divinity everywhere. This may not be like a vision of Krishna (person) everywhere, but just divinity. Such a person is called jivan mukta. One day you began meditation. The which has beginning also has an end. There is no need to further meditate. The purpose of meditation and this life (human birth) is fulfilled.

Sri Ramana Maharshi called this as sahaj samadhi. Ordinary person do not return from nirvikalp samadhi and after 21 days, connection with body permanently drops. But Some may return into this world to teach bhakti and jnana and keep a pseudo ego of knowledge or bhakta like that of shankara, sukhdev, etc.

So, first is nirvikalpa samadhi and then it is savikalp saamdhi. (tat tvam asi and then sarvam khalu-idam brahman)

In yog and bhakti reverse is true. In yog, one experiences divinity everywhere (sarvam khalu-idam brahman, and later on reaches nirkikalp samadhi

source: http://indiaspirituality.blogspot.in/2012/09/sahasrara-chakra.html

Index: http://indiaspirituality.blogspot.in/2012/09/chakras-index.html)

In bhakti, one keeps ego of 'I am bhakta' and later one even renounces this ego to merge into God losing his own identity says Sri Ramakrishna.

In simple words of Sri Ramakrishna, Nirakara brahman is like infinite ocean, pure water. But due to cold (of bhakti), it freezes and takes shape by becoming ice. Both water and ice are technically one and the same - water.

One has to know both sides of coin. Only one side of coin is stressed, other is just to be experienced.

e.g. If you want fire, you will have to accept it's warmth. Your focus can either be fire or it's heat.

e.g. Fire (light) for lighting the room and heat for cooking food, but you will have to accept both, as you cannot separate light of fire and it's heat.

Either side of Brahman (SaguNa and nirguNa) has to be experienced. Order is not important.

Madhusudan Saraswati is a perfect e.g. of harmony and he believed that Advaita is not for everybody and for masses bhakti (krishna bhakti) is the best.

Jnana, Advaita is not for everybody. But to progress in Jnana, bhakti is required. So bhakti is the foundation. Some say bhakti is for kids is a false notion. I would say, bhakti is the base. One must have a strong foundation.

Another name of Jnani is Brahma-niSTha (niSThA = firmness , steadiness , attachment , devotion) The one has firm faith in Brahman or rather one who is established in Brahman with firm faith is a Brahmanishtha

I would also like to say that bhakti has an edge that any class of people, pure / impure minded, intelligent / non-intelligent i.e. In general laymen (anybody) can practice and progress in spirituality.

Reason behind Shrutis, Smritis and Puranas praising one Personal deity

I always ask the question. WHY?

The reason is if you are told, that Krisha takes initiation from a sanyasin to chant the name of Shiva, your will mind will think that if Shiva is supreme, then why not chant the name of Shiva. The attention is diverted. To make one one-pointed and to make one understand that Krusha is enough, you do not need to take refuge in any other God, Krushna is praised and the supreme personality. Makes sense right. Ganesh Purana, Brahman Purana, Shiva Purana, Devi Bhagavat all praise Gods as supreme.

Our shastras teach many ways to attain moksha. Each scripture glorifies it's personal deity and object of worship.

Sri Ramakrishna says that, Bhagavan of bhakta, Brahman or Atman of Advaita and Paratman of Yogis is one and the same.

After Understanding basic concepts of Advaita, lets us learn more about PrakaraNa Granthas

PRAKARANA GRANTHA-S

Namaste,

This is Page 2/10 of Part I.

This section attempts to explain what are pakaraNa grantha-s and lists few of them with their content in brief.

Note: This article was composed on 13th Mar 2022 using IAST transliteration i.e. using Diacritical marks. For example PrakaraNa Granthas is written as Prakaraṇa Granthas except in Title to maintain uniformity of Page Headings

Prakaraṇa Grantha-s

Study of Vedānta deals with the renunciation of desires of mind, control of mind and to finally transcend the mind.

In order to apply the teaching of Upaniṣads in our practical life, one needs to attain sufficient purification of mind. Predominant guṇa of mind has to be sattva guṇa as it alone has the ability to turn the extrovert mind introvert and then merge the introvert mind in the heart i.e. the source of everything i.e. Brahman. Advaita vedānta as propagated by Śrī Ādi Śankarāchārya jī is a path of renunciation. The upaniṣads presume that one has to be clear in the basic terminology and concepts of the śāstras. However, for new students, it might be difficult to grasp the concepts easily. For example, one must know what is mana (mind), buddhi, ahɑmkāra, chitta, jīva, Brahman, panchakośas, three types of śarīras etc. In order to develop sufficient inner purity and to explain the basic terminology used in śāstras, Śrī Ādī Śankarāchārya jī composed many prakaraṇa grantha often known as introductory texts to advaita vedānta. Other prominent āchāryas like Śrī Vidyāraṇya Svāmī, Sadānanda and Dharmarāja Adhvarīndra also composed prakaraṇa granthas.

Please find the list of the prominent prakaraṇa granthas. Please note that the list is not exhaustive.

1. Tattva bodha
2. Ātma bodha
3. Aprokshānubhūti
4. Panchikaraṇa
5. Vivekchuḍāmaṇi
6. Updeśa sahasrī
7. Vākya vritti
8. Panchādɑśī of Śrī Vidyāraṇya Svāmī
9. Vedānta sāra of Sadānanda
10. Vedānta Paribhāśā of Dharmarāja Adhvarīndra
11. Dɑśasloki or Nirvāṇa Dɑśaka (considered as poem and not a grantha)
12. Sopāna Panchaka or Sādhana Panchaka or Upadeśa Panchaka (considered as poem and not a grantha)
13. Śata sloki

14. Vākyasudha (Dṛg-Dṛśya-Viveka) by Bhāratī Tirtha or Vidyāraṇya or Ādi Śankarāchārya
15. Svātmanirupaṇam
16. Jīvan Mukti Viveka by Śrī Vidyāraṇya Svāmī
17. Advaita Makaranda by Śrī Lakshmīdhara kavi
18. Brahmajñānāvalī mālā (considered as poem and not a grantha)
19. Atma ṣhaṭaka or Nirvāṇa ṣhaṭaka (considered as poem and not a grantha)
20. Prabodha Sudhākara (Lesser known work eulogizing Kṛṣṇa Bhakti)
21. Sadāchāra (Lesser known work)

There are many other works like Praṇava Bodha, Mahāvākya Vivekā, Advaita Makaranda of Lakshmiḍhara Kavī (Laxmidhar Kavi) and many more. There is also Dakshiṇāmurtī Stotra which has a commentary by the name Mānasollāsa. Svayamprakāṣa and Svāmī Rāma Tīrtha have also written commentary on it. Commentary by Svayamprakāśa is known as Tatvasudhā. This great work teaches the importance of maun and is for the advanced mumukshus and not for the beginners.

First five are considered as very important for the study. One must atleast study Tattva Bodh, Panchikaraṇa and Vivekachuḍāmaṇi. Atma ṣhaṭaka is also very important (though it falls within the category of poem). Study of these 7 granthas is more than enough for one's spiritual study. However, studying other granthas is also helpful. Many concepts appear to be repeated in more than one grantha. Study of Viveka-Chuḍāmaṇi is extremely important.

Reading of all the Prakaraṇa Granthas is not necessary. The essence of Upanishads and Gītā has to be known, which can be learned from a competent āchārya or by listening to their discources.

1. **Tattva Bodha** explains the basic terms like what is mana, what is jīva , what are the panchakośas etc. This is the first text to be studied.

2. **Ātma Bodha** gives clarity on our true nature and on advaita sthiti. It's study helps in understanding the commentaries by Ādi Śankarāchārya on Gīta and Upaniṣads.

3. **Aprokshānubhuti** deals more with the sādhanā or meditation.

4. **Panchikaraṇa** teaches how to jagat (world) and the bodies were created.

5. **Vivekchuḍāmaṇi**, true to its name, is really a gem of wisdom. It is said by the wise that correct and indepth study of Vivekachuḍāmaṇi can lead one to moksha. With 580 slokas, it is too long text as a prakaraṇa grantha. The beauty of Vivekchuḍāmaṇi is that many types of chandas (meters – traditional way of singing slokas) are used in its composition like standard chandas Anuṣhṭupa (in which Gītā is sung), āryā, rathodvatā, Shārdūlvikrīḍita (shardul means lion, kriḍā means play. Shārdūlvikrīḍita means that which is sung like playing lion cubs), Upjāti, Śikhariṇī, Īndravajā (or Īndravajra), Śālīnī, etc. Chanda Anuṣhṭupa and Chanda Upajāti are the most commonly used chandas.

6. **Upadeśa sahasri**, as the name indicates consists of 1000 upadeshas or slokas. It helps understand Upanishads and the concept of vivarta and advaita. For new students, it may be difficult to grasp all the concepts given in this text. This grantha is considered important for those who wish to take indepth study in the Śankara Bhāśyas on Prasthāntrayī.

7. **Vākya Vritti** explains Mahāvākya 'Tat tvam asi'

8. **Panchadaṣi** of Śrī Vidyāraṇya Svāmī consists of 15 chapters. It is considered as manual of advaita. Though a big text, it helps clear many concepts. This text is useful

for those who have also read philosophy of other sampradāyas like Vaishṇava sampradāyas, etc. It refutes claims that are contrary to advaita but in a positive and simple way rather than engaging in hair splitting logic. Those who have not read the polemical works whose aim is sva-mata-vistāra and para-mata-bhanga i.e. to propagate one's philosophy and objecting and discrediting the views of other philosophies. These debates went on mostly between Dvaita, Advaita and Visiṣṭadvaita – all philosophical sampradāyas based on vedānta. However, the new student will not even become aware in the first reading.

9. **Vedānta sāra** of Sadānanda is another useful text and is helpful is clearing advaita concepts and will make you comfortable when one reads works of other sampradāyas and Śankara Bhāśyas (on Prasthāntrayī)

10. **Vedānta Paribhāṣa** of Dharmarāja Advarīndra, though a parkaraṇa grantha is not suiable for a new student. Those having certain background in advaita and have read works of other sampradāyas may find it helpful in understanding the objections raised and refutations by Advaita sampradaya. This work can be skipped and only those interested in deep study for scholarly purpose can take up this text.

11. **Daśa sloki**, as the name suggests, consists of ten slokas. They explain the nature of Atman in a clear and precise way. These slokas were spontaneously composed by Ādi Śankarāchārya. There is an interesting story behind the composition of Daśa sloki. It is said that the life of Ādi Śankara was very short and he was supposed to live only upto eight years. He repeatedly requested his mother to allow him to take sanyāsa. His father had already left his physical body. His mother didn't allow him to take sanyāsa. Once, when he was eight years old, Śankara (his birth name) along with his friends was swimming in a river. Suddenly a crocodile attacked him. Other boys immediately ran to his mother and and informed her of incident and she ran towards the river saying, 'This kid always wanted to take sanyāsa. Instead of getting killed by crocodile, let my son take sanyāsa and live longer'. When she reached the spot, boys reminded her of what she was saying while running towards Śankara. She nodded yes and immediately the crocodile left and vanished in thin air. Śankara swam the towards the shore and returned back safely. He now reminded her of her vow and so she painfully allowed him to take sanyāsa. Now, the young Śankara went in search of a guru and found āshrama of Śrī Govindapāda, a Self Realised saint and scholar on Śhāstras. When the saint came out of meditation. He saw a young boy in front of him and inquired, 'Who are you'. Young boy, in his humbleness, spontaneously created daśa sloki as an answer. These were the first composition of Śrī Ādi Śankarāchārya even before he officially became a sanyāsin.

These slokas are worth studying as they deal with the nature of ātman. The young boy was already Self Realised even before formal initiation into sanyāsa. After sanyāsa, he was asked by his guru Śrī Govindapāda to revive the dying sanātana dharma by writing the commentaries on the Gītā and Upaniṣads. He became popular as Āchārya Śankara or Śankarāchārya. Since his successors too took his name as the honorific title adding it to their monastic name, in order to distinguish the great Āchārya, who established the four main pithās or mathas, known as amnaya pithās, he is being called as Ādi Śankarāchārya or simply Ādi Śankara (while referring him in their compositions or while citing any reference of Śankara Bhāṣya or during polemical debates). Ādi means 'first'. So he is the first Śankarāchārya or the found of four pīthas. Kanchi matha is the fifth pitha established by Ādi Śankara as per their records.

His Guru also knew of the short life span of Ādi Śankara and so his life span was increased to another eight years. After attaining sixteen years of age, he met Bhagavāna Śankara in the form of a Chāṇḍāla who then asked him to write the commentary on Brahmasūtras or Vedānta Sutrās. After finishing the commentary, Ādi Śankara offered it to Bhagavāna Śiva and humbly requested him to wait for another muhurata so that he can leave his body in the divine and auspicious presence of

Bhagavāna Śankara. To this Bhagavāna Śiva said, that 'Your work is not yet finished and you need to spread this knowledge of vedānta to all cornors of Bhārata and refute the non-vedic elements or corruptions spread in the society'. Āchārya's life was further increased by 16 more years giving him total 32 years of life. Thus started the Digvijaya Yātra of Ādi Śankara, who remained undefeated in his lifetime while engaging in debates and spreading dharma and the message of vedanta to every corner of Bhārata. In order to further spread his work, and for the sake of sanyāsins, before taking Mahasamadhi i.e. leaving physical body, he established four āshramas known as amnaya pīthās and gave charge to each of his four main disciples. Before departing the physical world, he gave few instructions which are his last instructions to a sincere mumukshu. These last instructions are known as Sopāna Panchaka.

12. **Sopāna Panchaka** consisting of five stanzas are the last instructions to a sincere mumukshu (seeker of truth). They focus on studying vedas and upon attaining sufficient inner purity must leave this samsara without delay and live the life as a sanyāsin and strive to achieve Jñāna and moksha.

13. **Śata sloki** is considered as the essence of Prasthāntrayī Bhāṣya

14. **Vākyasudha (Dṛg-Dṛśya-Viveka)** describes the difference between the seen and seer i.e. kshetra (field or object of observation) and kshetrajña. In explaining some concepts it takes the approach known as Anvaya-Vyatireka meaning to first presume and then disagree with the presumption. This type of approach is also known as Adhyāropa Apavāda meaning superimposition of a concept and then it's negation. It's authorship is disputed. The authorship of this work is attributed to Bhāratī Tirtha or Vidyāraṇya or Ādi Śankarāchārya. Bhagavad Gītā Chapter 13 is also known as Kshetra-Kshetrajña-Yoga and is the first chapter in teaching Jñāna Mārga which consists of chapters 13 to 15. Chapter 16 and 17 are called as Pariśiṣhta i.e. they are the barometers of our spiritual progress. Chapter 18, known as Moksha Sanyāsa Yoga is known as Upasaṁhāra or the summary and conclusion. Wise says it contains the essence of all 17 chapters and gives it's final conclusion. As a last chapter, it also gives phala-shruti meaning it eulogizes the benefits or fruits of reading and following the path of Gītā.

15. **Svātmanirupaṇam** is another work which explains the concepts of Advaita Vedānta, a way to approach like adopting jahadājahada lakshaṇa (Jahad-ajahad lakshaṇa is also known as bhāga – tyāga lakshaṇa) explains the approach and expands the Mahāvākya Tat-Tvam-Asi. Those interested in deeper study of Advaita and Śankara Bhāśyas may also find this text useful.

16. **Jīvanmukti Viveka** composed by Śrī Vidyāraṇya Svāmī, is very helpful in understanding what is the state of a Jīvanmukta and also Videha mukti. The text explains three conditions necessary for being a Jīvan mukta. It clears many doubts as how one can be free from the cycle of birth and death while still living in the physical body.

17. **Advaita Makaranda** composed by Śri Lakshmidhara Kavi is for advanced sādhakas. It is not for absolute beginners. It presents essence of vedānta in a clear way. It is for those who wish to do manana and wish to clear their doubts that remain after studying Upaniṣads and Gītā.

18. **Brahmajñānāvalī mālā** is the short composition explaining the true nature of Brahman. It is composed as a poem and not as a grantha. However it is useful for a sincere mumukshu (seeker of truth). It is in this composition that the famous phrase of Śrī Ādi Śankara 'Brahma Satya Jagan-mithyā' is mentioned in sloka 20. It is also present in Nirālamba Upaniṣada – 28

ब्रह्म सत्यं जगन्मिथ्या जीवो ब्रहैव नापरः (निरालम्बोपनिषद - २८)

"Brahma Satyam Jagan Mithya Jivo Brahmaiva Na Aparah" - nirAlambopaniShada - 28 (Nirālamba Upanishad - 28)

19. **Ātma ṣhataka (Shatak) or Nirvāṇa ṣhataka** is a compositions of six stanzas. It is an extremely important work. It explains Vivārta vāda, an important vāda adopted by Advaita to explain its position. This work explains the 'Neti-Neti' in a clear and precise way. It is one of the best composition and should be regularly read and memorized by a sincere sādhaka, as it is useful in his or her nididhāsana or while chanting OM. It is important to turn the mind inward and detach from all worldly matters and attachments. It also helps in not tuning our mind in subtle experiences like experiencing pancha kośas and always being a witness. First three lines of stanza describes what is not 'I' or 'Self'. The last line of every paragraph is very important – 'Chidānanda Rupo Śivoham Śivoham'. It describes our true nature. After reading reading three lines, one may ask question, then 'Who Am I?' and the response to it is the last i.e. fourth line saying 'Chidānanda Rupo Śivoham Śivoham'. If followed diligently, it can help one know one's true nature. Though an independent composition or a poem, it can be practically applied by only an advanced sādhaka.

20. **Prabodha Sudhākara** is a lesser known work and a rare one of it's kind attributed to Śrī Ādi Śankarāchārya jī. It describes and eulogizes dvaita bhakti and considers Kṛṣṇa bhakti as the supreme. It is also useful for a sādhakā to develop, shraddha, bhakti, samarpaṇa and sharaṇāgatī.

21. **Sadāchāra** is another lesser known work and a rare one of it's kind attributed to Śrī Ādi Śankarāchārya jī emphasizing on moral conduct in a vedāntic way, which is helpful in one's sadhana. One has to rise from tamas to rajas to satva. One's actions has to be of sātvika in nature in order to purify the mind and make it ready for advaita sādhanā. 'sad' generally means, that which is good. 'Āchāra' means behaviour or conduct. So general meaning of Sadāchāra is good [moral] conduct. However, 'sad' also means 'truth', which is sat-chit-ānanda or Brahman. Hence Sadāchāra can be described as the conduct which leads one towards realising one's true nature. Śrī Hansarāja jī Mahārāja (Hansaraj ji Maharaj) has written a Marathi commentary in Ovi chanda which is also very useful for the sincere seekers.

Conclusion

To conclude, first study select few Prakarana Granthas starting with Tattva Bodha, Panchikaraṇa , Ātma Bodh and Aparokshānubhuti. You may take a few more if you like. Viveka Chuḍāmaṇi has to be studied compulsorily. Then study Bhagavad Gītā along with Viveka Chuḍāmaṇi (Viveka Chuḍāmaṇi and Gīta has to be repeated many times. I found it useful when I studied them together). Then go to Study Upaishads leaving the bigger ones like Chāndogya and Brahadāraṇya. Maṇḍukya is very precise and useful for those chanting OM (strictly user the initiation and guidance of a competent Guru). Later can study other Upaniṣads like Īṣā, kena, Kaṭha, Muṇḍaka, Praśna, etc.

Brahmasutras are only for elite classes and not for beginners or even intermediate students. They are to be studied only under the guidance of a competent āchārya.

Sādhanā is the main thing to do and it is the only thing that will lead one to Ātma Jñāna. Abhyāsa and Vairāgya are the two wings of freedom that you need to have.

After Understanding Advaita and Prakarana Granthas, lets understand an important technique taught by traditional Guru-s adyAropa apavAda

ADHYAROPA APAVADA (अध्यारोप अपवाद) - A CONSISTENT TRADITIONAL TEACHING

[Upadated on 4th July 2016] Added **27** adhyAropa apavAda in chatuHslokI bhAgavat, a part of Srimad BhAgavatam

adhyAropa apavAda (अध्यारोप अपवाद)- Only Consistent Traditional Teaching as taught by Adi Shankara BhagavadpAda

adhyAropa apavAda (अध्यारोपापवाद) is a unique traditional method of teaching rediscovered by Swami Sacchidanandendra Saraswati. According to Swamiji, this method is the only consistent method of teaching of vedAnta.

According to this method, first super imposition on Self (Atman / Brahman) is mentioned and later on, this superimposition is negated in same shruti.

adhyAropa apavAda can be defined as, false Superimposition (adhyAropa, अध्यारोप) Followed by Retraction (apavAda, अपवाद).

This doctrine actually leads to ajAta vAda. in ajAta vAda, there is no creation, no mAyA, no jagat, no Ishvara. Only Atma tatva, Brahma tatva or pure consciousness. Upanishads and Gita say that **'in the beginning there was no being and no non being',** as in Gita 13.13

This in itself is very deep, critical study and is beyond the scope of this work. However, we will study it in brief.

To sum up in brief.

Attribute of witness is added and then it is negated by saying that it cannot be reached through mind, eyes, speech, etc.

The concept of witness is introduced since the objective is to indicate that 'I' am not any object of observation. But later on, even the attribute of being a witness is removed, as to see something, there has to be another (an object that can be seen and observer).

Hence Brahman cannot be a witness also. So the false attribute of being a witness is also negated by saying that Brahman is beyond 5 senses and mind.

General trend in upanishads is found to be

- There was only one brahman
- Then brahman decided to be many i.e. created universe and jIva-s.
- Though undivided brahman became many (This indicates that the creation is not completely real, but appears to be real under the influence of mAyA
- Different forms of brahman like rAma, kruShNa, Siva, etc are praised with attributes like creator, destroyer, all powerful, compassionate, etc
- Theory of being witness to all that is non-self is given
- Being a witness will help separate 'I' from body, mind, intellect, and all that is non self
- Unity of observer and object of observer is experienced
- After the object of observation drops, being witness also drops.
- Finally what remains is nothing but pure consciousness.

To further simplify, we can say that

Brahman was one in the beginning
Brahman became many --> attributes were added

Being a witness --> beginning of separation

Object of observation melts, what remains is non-dual brahman

Brahman can be described only in a negative way

It is not possible to describe Brahman, hence it cannot be taught positively. No attribute can be given to describe it. It shows that all attributes are false and they are negated. Hence the only method to explain Brahman is negative approach or false superimposition and retraction or negation of false super imposition.

adhyAropa apavAda in Bhagavad Gita

Note: *In some versions, first verse of chapter 13 is not found, Adi Shankara did not comment on it, while Ramanuja commented.*

In Shankara Bhasya, total verses in chapter 13 are 34, while that in Ramanuja Bhasya are 35. If we accept 35 verses in chapter 13, then total number of verses in Gita will be 701.

Last verse of Chapter 13 says

क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञयोरेवमन्तरं ज्ञानचक्षुषा।
भूतप्रकृतिमोक्षं च ये विदुर्यान्ति ते परम्।।13.34।।

13.34 They who, by the eye of knowledge, **perceive the distinction between the field and its knower and also the liberation from the Nature of being**, go to the Supreme.

This verse mentions two things

1. Perceive the distinction between the field and its knower
2. Liberation from the Nature of being

This means that first Self or Atman is separated from Non-Self by being a witness. But what is to be separated? that which we identify as 'I' or Self. To separate Self from Non-Self, we must define what is Self. In other words attributes are given to Self or Atman. The attributes are 'knower' or 'witness' or 'observer' or 'SAkSi' or 'kshetraGYa'. Since one is a witness, it means that there is an object that one is witness.

So here there are two things.

1. 'Witness' or 'Observer' called as kshetraGYa' and
2. The 'object of observation'.

This means there is duality. To enter into non-dual state one has to even drop the attributes like 'knower' or 'witness'. This means that only thing left is observer. But the terms observer is relative as it is dependent upon 'object of observation' i.e. one can be called as observer only if one is observing something. After non-Self is separated from Self, the attributes of 'witness' or 'knower' are also removed.

This can be observed in Gita 13.1 and 13.13

Atman as Witness 'Kshetragya'

श्री भगवानुवाच
इदं शरीरं कौन्तेय क्षेत्रमित्यभिधीयते।
एतद्यो वेत्ति तं प्राहुः क्षेत्रज्ञ इति तद्विदः।।13.1।।

13.1 The Blessed Lord said - O son of Kunti, **this body is referred to as the 'field' or**

'kshetra'. Those who are versed in this call him **who is conscious of it as the 'knower of the field' or 'kshetraGYa'**.

Attribute of being a witness is removed

ज्ञेयं यत्तत्प्रवक्ष्यामि यज्ज्ञात्वाऽमृतमश्नुते।

अनादिमत्परं ब्रह्म न सत्तन्नासदुच्यते।।13.13।।

13.13 I shall speak of that which is to be known, by realizing which one attains Immortality. The supreme Brahman is without any beginning. **That is called neither being nor non-being.**

Later verses are

सर्वतः पाणिपादं तत्सर्वतोऽक्षिशिरोमुखम्।

सर्वतः श्रुतिमल्लोके सर्वमावृत्य तिष्ठति।।13.14।।

13.14 That (Knowable), which has hands and feet everwhere, which has eyes, heads and mouths everywhere, which has ears everywhere, **exists in creatures by pervading them all.**

सर्वेन्द्रियगुणाभासं सर्वेन्द्रियविवर्जितम्।

असक्तं सर्वभृच्चैव निर्गुणं गुणभोक्तृ च।।13.15।।

13.15 Shining through the functions of all the organs, **(yet) devoid of all the organs**; **unattached**, and verily the supporter of all; **without quality**, and the perceiver of qualities;

Points to be observed --> neither being nor non-being. Then attributes of omnipresence -- then retraction of these qualities as devoid of all organs, without quality.

बहिरन्तश्च भूतानामचरं चरमेव च।

सूक्ष्मत्वात्तदविज्ञेयं दूरस्थं चान्तिके च तत्।।13.16।।

13.16 Existing outside and inside all beings; moving as well as non-moving, It is incomprehensible due to subtleness. So also, It is far away, and yet near.

OR

13.16 Outside and within (all) beings the unmoving and also the moving; because of Its subtlety, unknowable; and near and far away is That.

This method is found in other verses of Gita. Lets analyze a few verses.

AdhyAropa ApavAda in Chapter 9

Please refer to shankara bhasya in 'Gita Super Site'. Select both hindi commentary (Sri Harikrishandas Goenka) and english commentary (Swami Gambhirananda)

AdhyAropa (superimposition)

In chapter 9, Bhagavan says

मया ततमिदं सर्वं जगदव्यक्तमूर्तिना।
मत्स्थानि सर्वभूतानि न चाहं तेष्ववस्थितः।।9.4।।

mayā tatamidaṅ sarvaṅ jagadavyaktamūrtinā.
matsthāni sarvabhūtāni na cāhaṅ tēṣvavasthitaḥ..9.4..

9.4 All this world is pervaded by Me in My unmanifest aspect (nirgina Brahman); **all beings exist in Me, but I do not dwell in them.**

ApavAda (retraction or negation)

न च मत्स्थानि भूतानि पश्य मे योगमैश्वरम्।
भूतभृन्न च भूतस्थो ममात्मा भूतभावनः।।9.5।।

na ca matsthāni bhūtāni paśya mē yōgamaiśvaram.
bhūtabhṛnna ca bhūtasthō mamātmā bhūtabhāvanaḥ..9.5..

9.5 **Nor do beings exist in Me (in reality);** behold My divine Yoga, supporting all beings, but not dwelling in them, is My Self, the efficient cause of beings.

another e.g. to make things easy.

AdhyAropa in Chapter 3, ApavAda in Chapter 4

Adhyaropa

न हि कश्चित्क्षणमपि जातु तिष्ठत्यकर्मकृत्।
कार्यते ह्यवशः कर्म सर्वः प्रकृतिजैर्गुणैः।।3.5।।

3.5 Because, no one ever remains even for a moment without doing work. For all are made to work under compulsion by the gunas born of Nature.

ApavAda

यथैधांसि समिद्धोऽग्निर्भस्मसात्कुरुतेऽर्जुन।
ज्ञानाग्निः सर्वकर्माणि भस्मसात्कुरुते तथा।।4.37।।

4.37 Just as burning fire turns fuel to ashes, O Arjuna, so does the fire of knowledge turn all Karma to ashes.

Is this not contradictory? So first something is said, then it is retracted or negated.

To a matured sadhaka, shastras say that all karmas are destroyed. All means prArabhdha, AgAmi and sanchit. So even prArabhdha is destroyed. Gita also says that one cannot be free from any karma and so one should practice nitya karmas.

Upadeshas are said from adhikAra bheda.

Now you got he point as why in Sv. Up. even though the size of jiva is given, it says, it has to be experienced as infinite.

How was this traditional Method discovered?

Swamiji observed that this method of teaching was adopted by Shankara BhagavadpAda from his Gita BhaSya in 13.13. (13.14 in other versions of Gita)

We will try to understand this method in detail.

Since Adi Shankara also discusses verse 13.13, lets see what this verse says. Important points are colour coded so that they can be easily located.

ज्ञेयं यत्तत्प्रवक्ष्यामि यज्ज्ञात्वाऽमृतमश्नुते।

अनादिमत्परं ब्रह्म न सत्तन्नासदुच्यते।।13.13।।

13.13 I shall speak of that which is to be known, by realizing which one attains Immortality. The supreme Brahman is without any beginning. **That is called neither being nor non-being.**

Lets analyze verse on 13.14 in detail

सर्वतः पाणिपादं तत्सर्वतोऽक्षिशिरोमुखम्।
सर्वतः श्रुतिमल्लोके सर्वमावृत्य तिष्ठति।।13.14।।

13.14 That (Knowable), which has hands and feet everywhere, which has eyes, heads and mouths everywhere, which has ears everywhere, exists in creatures by pervading them all.

Shankara Bhasya Sanskrit

-- सर्वतःपाणिपादं सर्वतः पाणयः पादाश्च अस्य इति सर्वतःपाणिपादं तत् ज्ञेयम्। सर्वप्राणिकरणोपाधिभिः क्षेत्रज्ञस्य अस्तित्वं विभाव्यते। क्षेत्रज्ञश्च क्षेत्रोपाधितः उच्यते। क्षेत्रं च पाणिपादादिभिः अनेकधा भिन्नम्। क्षेत्रोपाधिभेदकृतं विशेषजातं मिथ्यैव क्षेत्रज्ञस्य, इति तदपनयनेन **ज्ञेयत्वमुक्तम् 'न सत्तन्नासदुच्यते' इति**। उपाधिकृतं मिथ्यारूपमपि अस्तित्वाधिगमाय ज्ञेयधर्मवत् परिकल्प्य उच्यते 'सर्वतःपाणिपादम्' इत्यादि। **तथा हि संप्रदायविदां वचनम् -- 'अध्यारोपापवादाभ्यां निष्प्रपञ्चं प्रपञ्च्यते' इति।** सर्वत्र सर्वदेहावयवत्वेन गम्यमानाः पाणिपादादयः ज्ञेयशक्तिसद्भावनिमित्तस्वकार्याः इति ज्ञेयसद्भावे लिङ्गानि 'ज्ञेयस्य' इति उपचारतः उच्यन्ते। तथा व्याख्येयम् अन्यत्। सर्वतःपाणिपादं तत् ज्ञेयम्। सर्वतोऽक्षिशिरोमुखं सर्वतः अक्षीणि शिरांसि मुखानि च यस्य तत् सर्वतोऽक्षिशिरोमुखम्; सर्वतःश्रुतिमत् श्रुतिः श्रवणेन्द्रियम्, तत् यस्य तत् श्रुतिमत्, लोके प्राणिनिकाये, सर्वम् आवृत्य संव्याप्य तिष्ठति स्थितिं लभते।।उपाधिभूतपाणिपादादीन्द्रियाध्यारोपणात् ज्ञेयस्य तद्वत्ताशङ्का मा भूत् इत्येवमर्थः श्लोकारम्भः -- ।।13.13।।

Lets have the Hindi Translation of Shankara Bhasya by Sri Harikrishandas Goenka

वह 'ज्ञेय' सत् शब्दद्वारा होनेवाली प्रतीतिका विषय नहीं है, इससे उसके न होनेकी आशङ्का होनेपर उस आशङ्काकी निवृत्तिके लिये, समस्त प्राणियोंकी इन्द्रियादि उपाधियोंद्वारा उस ज्ञेयके अस्तित्वका प्रतिपादन करते हुए कहते हैं -- वह ज्ञेय सब ओर हाथ-पैरवाला है अर्थात् उसके हाथ-पैर सर्वत्र फैले हुए हैं। सब प्राणियोंकी इन्द्रियरूप उपाधियोंद्वारा क्षेत्रज्ञका अस्तित्व प्रकट होता है। क्षेत्ररूप उपाधिके कारण ही वह ज्ञेय क्षेत्रज्ञ कहा जाता है। क्षेत्ररूप उपाधि हाथ, पैर आदि भेदसे अनेक प्रकार विभक्त है। वास्तवमें, क्षेत्रकी उपाधियोंके भेदसे किये हुए समस्त भेद क्षेत्रज्ञमें मिथ्या ही हैं, **अतः उनको हटाकर ज्ञेयका स्वरूप 'वह न सत् कहा जा सकता है और न असत् ही कहा जा सकता है' ऐसे बतलाया गया है।** तथा ज्ञेयका अस्तित्व समझानेके लिये उपाधिकृत मिथ्यारूपको भी उसके धर्मकी भाँति कल्पना करके उसको 'सब ओरसे हाथ-पैरवाला' है, इत्यादि प्रकारसे बतलाया जाता है। **सम्प्रदाय-परम्पराको जाननेवालोंका भी यही कहना है कि 'अध्यारोप और अपवाददद्वारा प्रपञ्चरहित परमात्माकी व्याख्या की जाती है। '** सर्वत्र अर्थात् सब शरीरोंके अंगरूपसे स्थित हाथ, पैर आदि इन्द्रियाँ, ज्ञेय शक्तिकी सत्तासे ही स्वकार्यमें समर्थ हो रही हैं, अतः ये सब ज्ञेयकी सत्ताके चिह्न होनेके कारण उपचारसे ज्ञेयके (धर्म) कहे जाते हैं। ऐसे ही और सबकी भी व्याख्या कर लेनी चाहिये। वह ज्ञेय सब ओर हाथ-पैरवाला है, तथा सब ओर नेत्र, शिर और मुखवाला है -- जिसके आँख, शिर और मुख सर्वत्र हों, वह सर्वतोऽक्षिशिरोमुख कहलाता है तथा वह सब ओर कानवाला है -- जिसके श्रुति अर्थात् श्रवणेन्द्रिय हो वह श्रुतिमत् (कानवाला) कहा जाता है। इस लोकमें -- समस्त प्राणिसमुदायमें वह सबको व्याप्त करके स्थित है ।।13.13।।

Lets see simplified English Translation by Swami Gambhirananda

13.13 That-the Knowable which has hands and feet everywhere.The existence of the Knower of the field is revealed through the adjuncts in the form of the organs of all creatures. And the Knower of the field is spoken of as such because of the limiting adjuncts of the field. The field, too, is diversely differentiated as hands, feet, etc. All diversity in the Knower of the field, caused by the differences in the adjunct-the field, is certainly unreal. Hence, by denying it, the nature of the Knowable has been stated, in, **'That is called neither being nor non-being.'** Although the unreal form is caused by the limiting adjuncts, still, for the comprehension of Its existence it is said, '(It) has hands and feet

everywhere, etc., by assuming this as a quality of the Knowable. Thus, as is well known, **there is saying of the people versed in tradition, 'The Transcendental is described with the help of superimposition and its refutation'.** Everywhere the hands, feet, etc., which are perceived as limbs of all bodies, perform, their duties due to the presence of the power of the Knowable (Brahman). Thus the grounds for the inference of the existence of the Knowable are metaphorically spoken of as belonging to the Knowable. The others have to be explained similarly. That Knowable has hands and feet everywhere. That which has eyes, heads, and mouths everywhere is sarvatoksi-siro-mukham. That which has ears every-where is sarvatah-srutimat: sruti means the organs of hearing; that which has it is sruti-mat. Tisthati, It exists, remains established; loke, in the multititude of creatures; avrtya, by pervading; sarvam, them all. With this purpose is view, that as a result of the superimposition of the organs like hands, feet, etc., which are adjuncts, there may not be the misconception that the Knowable is possessed of them (adjuncts), the (next) verse is begun:

Important Points

1. Knowers of the Tradition say --> Adi Shankara did not say this is his own theory or yukti.

2. False Superimposition followed by negation is taught by wise.

The commentary concludes that, False attributes are added on Self and then they are denied. This is the traditional method as taught by wise men. This technique is called as adhyAropa apavAda.

For Simplicity e.g. from only Gita are given. Also note that Swamiji pointed out e.g. from many upanishads and from Gaudapadacharya's karika on Mandukya Upanishad. Gaudapadacharya says, with this verse the shruti negates all that it has taught.

Now Lets analyze the last verse of Chapter 13

क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञयोरेवमन्तरं ज्ञानचक्षुषा।
भूतप्रकृतिमोक्षं च ये विदुर्यान्ति ते परम्।।13.34।।

13.34 They who, by the eye of knowledge, **perceive the distinction between the field and its knower and also the liberation from the Nature of being**, go to the Supreme.

Sanskrit commentary by Sri Sankaracharya

-- -क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञयोः यथाव्याख्यातयोः एवं यथाप्रदर्शितप्रकारेण अन्तरम् इतरेतरवैलक्षण्यविशेषं ज्ञानचक्षुषा शास्त्राचार्यप्रसादोपदेशजनितम् आत्मप्रत्ययिकं ज्ञानं चक्षुः, तेन ज्ञानचक्षुषा, भूतप्रकृतिमोक्षं च, भूतानां प्रकृतिः अविद्यालक्षणा अव्यक्ताख्या, तस्याः भूतप्रकृतेः मोक्षणम् अभावगमनं च ये विदुः विजानन्ति, यान्ति गच्छन्ति ते

परं परमात्मतत्त्वं ब्रह्म, न पुनः देहं आददते इत्यर्थः।।इति श्रीमत्परमहंसपरिव्राजकाचार्यस्य श्रीगोविन्दभगवत्पूज्यपादशिष्यस्य श्रीमच्छंकरभगवतः कृतौ श्रीमद्भगवद्गीताभाष्येत्रयोदशोऽध्यायः।।श्रीमच्छंकरभगवत्पादविरचितम्श्रीमद्भगवद्गीताभाष्यम् ।।13.34।।

Hindi translation by Sri Harikrishandas Goenka (on Sri Sankaracharya's Sanskrit Commentary)

सारे अध्यायके अर्थका उपसंहार करनेके लिये यह श्लोक (कहा जाता है) -- जो पुरुष शास्त्र और आचार्यके उपदेशसे उत्पन्न आत्मसाक्षात्काररूप ज्ञाननेत्रोंद्वारा, **पहले बतलाये हुए क्षेत्र और क्षेत्रज्ञके अन्तरको**, -- उनकी पारस्परकि विलक्षणताको, इस पूर्वदर्शित प्रकारसे जान लेते हैं, **और वैसे ही अव्यक्त नामक अविद्यारूप भूतोंकी प्रकृतिके मोक्षको, यानी उसका अभाव कर देनेको भी जानते हैं**, वे परमार्थतत्त्वस्वरूप ब्रह्मको प्राप्त हो जाते हैं, पुनर्जन्म नहीं पाते ।।13.34।।

English translation by Swami Gambhirananda (on Sri Sankaracharya's Sanskrit Commentary) – Simplified

13.35 Those who know thus, in the manner described above; through the eye of wisdom- the eye is the realization in the form of the knowledge of the Self, which arises from following the instructions of the scriptures and teachers; through that eye of wisdom; the distinction, **the particular mutual distinction between the field and the Knower of the field** as they have been explained; **and the annihilation of the Matrix of beings**- the Matrix of beings is that which is described as ignorance and is **called the Unmanifest; (those who know) the annihilation (moksanam) of that Matrix of beings**, they reach, go to the Supreme, to Brahman, the Reality which is the supreme Goal. The idea is that they do not take up a body again.

Idea is being Witness is given in 1*st* verse of chapter 13

श्री भगवानुवाच
इदं शरीरं कौन्तेय क्षेत्रमित्यभिधीयते।
एतद्यो वेत्ति तं प्राहुः क्षेत्रज्ञ इति तद्विदः।।13.1।।

13.1 The Blessed Lord said -- O son of Kunti, this body is referred to as the 'field'. Those who are versed in this call him who is conscious of it as the 'knower of the field'.

From this we conclude that Adi Shankara pointed out traditional method of teaching found in shastras is adhyaropa apavada i.e, first there is a false superimposition on the Self. Self is separated as a witness and then then the superimposition on the Self is removed.

This is done keeping in mind the mental make-up of disciple.

In the beginning all disciples are in duality. It is like milk and water mixed and inseparable.

So first the qualities of Self are given which are different from the qualities of Objects of perception.

Next step is to separate the witness from the sense objects by instructing to be a witness of sense objects, thoughts and mind. This is like separation of milk from water. Those who are capable of doing this or practicing this art are called Hansa (Swan). Hansa is an important symbol in Advaita as it is said that it can separate milk from water.

After one separates oneself i.e. 'I' or Atman from the sense objects, the qualities superimposed on Self are also negated by saying that which not being and not non-being, cannot be described by words, without beginning and end (BG 13.32) or as in Satyam Jnanam Anantam Brahman, beyond words, beyond mind and speech, etc. Here there is an attempt to negate the eariler attribute like being witness, bliss, most subtlest, etc. After this negation of false superimposition, Self Alone shines. One enters into the state of Nirvikalp Samadhi, where there is no second, no one to experience and hence this state cannot be described in words.

To sum up,

1. Give knowledge that Self is different than body and sense objects i.e. *atma-anatma vivek, nitya - anitya vivek*
2. Give knowledge that Self is witness and that Self is indeweller of the body and hence can be a witness - *kshetra-kshetragnya viveka, drig-drashya vivek, drasTA-driShya viveka*
3. Give knowledge that Self cannot be perceived and is beyond mind

In first two steps, some attributes like omnipresent, witness, etc are superimposed on Self
In third step, all the attributes are negated, so that only Self Shines. There is no witness to see Self or Brahman.

This is the traditional teaching.

adhyAropa apavAda is also found in viShNu sahanranAma Sankara bhASya.

adhyAropa apavAda in viShNu sahasranAma bhASya

Adi Sankara while explaining 10th name pUtAtmA says -

By भूत्कृत् bhUtakrut etc names, they (seem to suffer from the) दोशा doSa (defect) of गुणआधिनता guNaAdhinatA i.e. it looks like paramAtmA is influenced by three guNa-s, hence now, by saying pUtAtmA, which means of pure nature (पवित्रस्वरुप), that doSa (defect) is negated (प्रतिषिध्यते, pratiShidhyate). Adi Sankara further quotes Sv. Up. 6.11 shruti vacan 'केवलो निर्गुणश्च' 'kevalo nirguNaSca'.

Adi Sankara further explains that, the association of puruSa with three guNa-s is by Self will only, meaning, puruSa is not bound by three guNa-s, but it is the controller of guNa-s.

Adi Sankara further explains 11th word 'परमात्मा' as - that which is the best (परम) and is also AtmA (आत्मा), is called by the name 'परमात्मा' paramAtmA. That [paramAtmA] is

different from cause and effect (कार्य-कारण) and is of the nature of 'नित्य-शुद्ध-बुध्दमुक्त', eternal-pure-free.

My praNAma-s (prostrations) to all the teachers of Traditional teaching, my praNAma-s to all the wisemen, to Shri Adi Shankara to Shri GaudpadAchArya and to Shri Swami Sacchidanandendra Saraswati. My koti koti pranam to my Guru who put me on the path of spirituality and teaching this method.

Before we try to find this teaching, lets understand how this method is traditional.

How is this method Traditional?

This technique is not innovated by our acharya. In his Gita Bhasya he writes,

"Thus, as is well known, **there is saying of the people versed in tradition, 'The Transcendental is described with the help of superimposition and its refutation'.** "

It is also found in Adi Shankara's Param Guru GauDapAdAchArya (*Gaudapadacharya*) . GauDapadAchArya has cited Br. Up. in his Mandukya kArikA. He says,

'The text denies all that it had previously taught. by saying *''he (the Self) is neither this nor that (Br. Up.. II.iii.6)''*, and by showing that the Self is beyond all perception and conception. Through this the Unborn is able to manifest' (G.K. III.26)'

Source: Page 4, Method of Vedanta, Swami SAcchidanandendra Saraswati, translated by A. J. Alston.

It is well known that Sri Gaudapada has the universal reputation in the Vedantic world of having been teacher of BhagavadpAda's teacher GovindpAda. **Gaudapada himself has referred with marks of respect to earlier knowers of the tradition**, in the words, **'By experts in Upanishads'** (G.K. II.31) and **'By sages thoroughly conversant with Veda' (G.K. II.35)**

Source: Page 39-40, Chapter 3, Method of Vedanta, Swami Sacchidanandendra Saraswati, translated by A. J. Alston.

If we have a look at adhyAsa BhASyam, an intro to SArIrika MimimAmsA (Brahma SUtra), it talks about avidya, it's reason and removal of avidya. Acharya ssays that avidyA is adhyAsa, superimposition of non-self upon Self (Atman), what is left is pure Knowledge i.e. vidyA meaning the experience of Brahman (not as separate entity). There is no mention in his intro that the purpose is to establish Vishnu as Brahman or give supreme satus to Vishnu or any form of God.

We can find adhyAsa BhASya here (html - advaita-vedanta.org), here (pdf of html at scribd) and here (pdf at scribd- commentary by Swami Ghambhirananda)

adhyAropa apavAda by post Sankara advaitins

adhyAropa apavAda is found in pancadaSI of SrI vidyAraNya svAmI and in vedAnta sAra of sadAnanda yogigindra.

adhyAropa apavAda in yoga texts

yoga is a dualitc school which meditative approach than philosophical approach. Meditation in the advaita way is called as nidhidhyAsana. Unlike nidhidhyAsana where the enquirer literally enquires into the true nature of his Self and tries to find the source of first person i.e. 'I' by separating 'I' from all that is 'not-I' by the power of discrimination, dispassion and other qualities. While these qualities are also important for a yogI and are also mentioned in some yoga texts, the path is to strengthen physical and other bodies, clean and purify nADI-s and raise the kunDalini from mulAdhAra to sahasrAra chakra so as to get enlightened. Various ways to do so are mentioned using various Asana-s, prANAyam-s, kriyAs-, meditation on chakra-s and so on. The final destination according to a yogI is also nirvikalp samAdhi.

yoga accepts both theories, the world is real, as said by guru gorakshanath in siddha siddhAnta paddhati and Jnandeva in his Amritanubhava or **the world is unreal** as said by Patanjali in his Yoga Sutra 2.22. It also accepts meditation on both saguNa and nirguNa brahman as mentioned in yoga yajnavalkya, a text highly revered by A great yogi of 20th century T Krishnamacharya of Sri Vaishnav Sampraday. According to him, Yoga Yajnavalkya is older than of most available literature on yoga.

adhyAropa apavAda in Siva samhitA

Dating and authenticity of Siva samhitA - *Can be skipped*

Siva samhitA is one of the three principle texts on haTha yoga, the other two being geraNDa samhitA (composed in 17th Century) and haTha yoga pradipikA of svAtmArAma, a student of nAtha yoga. Most scholars believe Siva samhitA as composed in 16-17th century, but James Mallinson in his critical commentary and translation of Siva samhitA argues that this text is widely quoted by medieval saints like SankarAnanda, the guru of the great vidyAraNya svAmI (13-14th century), ballAla (commentator on Siva saharaNAma), nArAyaNa tirth (14-15th century), and bhAvadeva mIshrA. Further, he said that Siva samhitA borrowed verses from older works like amritasiddhi which is said to be composed in 12th century. Hence Mallinson puts Siva samhitA as composed in 1500 CE. However, I would say that since vidyAraNya svAmI lived from 1331–1386, hence the work out to be olden than him. Considering the stature of vidyAraNyta svAmI, SankarAnandA and other AcArya-s we can conclude that this work is much older than 1500 CE and is considered as authentic as it is quoted by various AcArya-s. The author of Siva samhitA is unknown.

In chapter 1, verse 67 of Siva samhitA the author describes adhyAropa apavAda

1.67 That one Spirit, through differentiation, verily becomes a son, a father, etc. The sacred scriptures have demonstrated the universe to be the freak of mAyA. **The yogI destroys this phenomenal universe by realising that it is but the result of adhyAropa and by means of apavAda.**

adhyAropa apavAda in all 10 (ten) Upanishads

Since we find this teaching in Bhagavad Gita, which is essence of Upanishads, upanishads should also contain this teaching.

GauDapadAchArya had given example of BrihadAraNya Upanishad in his kArikA, lets study this upanishad first. It should also be noted that our vArttikakAra (SureshvarAchArya) has written his vArttikA- (sub-commentaries, explanatory notes on Shankara BhASya) of BrihadAraNya and Taittiriya Upanishads, both belonging to Yajurveda. So both are very important to Advaitins. Another reason to select Br. Up. to study is that it is in the AraNyaka part of Shukla Yajurveda, while Isa is in the Samhita part.

adhyAropa apavAda in BrihadAraNya Upanishad

AdhyAropa -Superimosition of different forms gross, subtle, air, either, etc on Brahman

II-iii-1: Brahman has but two forms – gross and subtle, mortal and immortal, limited and unlimited, defined and undefined.

II-iii-2: The gross (form) is that which is other than air and the ether. It is mortal, it is limited, and it is defined. The essence of that which is gross, mortal, limited and defined is the sun that shines, for it is the essence of the defined.

II-iii-3: Now the subtle – it is air and the ether. It is immortal, it is unlimited, and it is undefined. The essence of that which is subtle, immortal, unlimited and undefined is the being that is in the sun, for that is the essence of the undefined. This is with reference to the gods.

II-iii-4: Now with reference to the body: the gross form is but this – what is other than (the corporeal) air and the ether that is in the body. It is mortal, it is limited and it is defined. The essence of that which is gross, mortal, limited and defined is the eye, for it is the essence of the defined.

II-iii-5: Now the subtle – it is (the corporeal) air and the ether that is in the body. It is immortal, it is unlimited, and it is undefined. The essence of that which is subtle, immortal,

unlimited and undefined is this being that is in the right eye, for this is the essence of the undefined.

ApavAda - Retraction of everything said before

II-iii-6: The form of that 'being' is as follows: like a cloth dyed with turmeric, or like grey sheep's wool, or like the (scarlet) insect called Indragopa, or like a tongue of fire, or like a white lotus, or like a flash of lightning. He who knows it as such attains splendour like a flash of lightning. **Now therefore the description (of Brahman): 'Not this, not this'. Because there is no other and more appropriate description than this 'Not this'.** Now Its name: 'The Truth of truth'. The vital force is truth, and It is the Truth of that.

adhyAropa apavAda in Isa Upanishad

AdhyAropa -Superimosition of lordship on Brahman

1. Om. All this should be covered by the Lord, whatsoever moves on the earth.

4. Unmoving, It is one, faster than the mind. The senses cannot reach It, for It proceeds ahead. Remaining static. It overtakes others that run. On account of Its presence, Matarsiva (the wind) conducts the activities of beings.

ApavAda - Retraction of everything said before

5. It moves; It moves not. It is far; It is near. It is within all; It is without all.

adhyAropa apavAda in Kena Upanishad

AdhyAropa -Superimosition of attirbutes like senses and five elements on Brahman

I-1. Wished by whom is the mind directed to fall (on its objects)? Directed by whom does the foremost vital air move? By whom is wished this speech which the people utter? Who is the radiant being that unites the eye and the ear (with their objects)?

I-2. Because He is the ear of the ear, the mind of the mind, the speech of speech, the vital air of the vital air, and the eye of the eye, the wise, freeing themselves (from the identity with the senses) and renouncing the world, become immortal.

ApavAda - Retraction of everything said before

I-3. The eye does not reach there, nor speech, nor mind, **nor do we know (Its mature).** Therefore we don't know how to impart instruction (about It). Distinct indeed is That from the known and distinct from the unknown. Thus have we heard from the ancients who expounded It to us.

AdhyAropa -Superimosition of attirbutes like senses and five elements on Brahman

I-4. That which is not uttered by speech, that by which the word is expressed, know That alone to be Brahman, and not this (non-Brahman) which is being worshipped.

I-5. That which one does not think with the mind, that by which, they say, the mind is thought, know That alone to be Brahman, and not this (non-Brahman) which is being worshipped.

I-6. That which man does not see with the eye, that by which man sees the activities of the eye, know That alone to be Brahman, and not this (non-Brahman) which is being worshipped.

I-7. That which man does not hear with the ear, that by which man hears the ear's hearing, know That alone to be Brahman, and not this (non-Brahman) which is being worshipped.

I-8. That which man does not smell with the organ of smell, that by which the organ of smell is attracted towards its objects, know That alone to be Brahman, and not this (non-Brahman) which is being worshipped.

ApavAda - Retraction of everything said before

II-3. It is known to him to whom It is unknown; he to whom It is known does not know It. It is unknown to those who know, and known to those who know not.

adhyAropa apavAda in Katha Upanishad

AdhyAropa - Logical Reasoning

1-I-29. O Death, **tell us of that, of the great Beyond,** about which man entertain doubt. Nachiketas does not pray for any other boon than this which enters into the secret that is hidden.

1-II-1. **Different is (that which is) preferable; and different, indeed, is the pleasurable.** These two, serving different purposes, blind man. Good accrues to him who, of these two, chooses the preferable. He who chooses the pleasurable falls from the goal. 1-II-2. The preferable and the pleasurable approach man. **The intelligent one examines both and separates them. Yea, the intelligent one prefers the preferable to the pleasurable,** (whereas) the ignorant one selects the pleasurable for the sake of yoga (attainment of that which is not already possessed) and kshema (the preservation of that which is already in possession).

ApavAda - Retraction of knowing by logical reasoning

1-II-8. This (Self), if taught by an inferior person, is not easily comprehended, for It is variously thought of. Unless taught by another (who is a perceiver of non-difference) **there is no way (of comprehending It), for It is not arguable and is subtler than subtlety.**

1-II-9. This (knowledge of the Self) attained by thee cannot be had through logical reasoning. O dearest, this doctrine, only if taught by some teacher (other than a logician), leads to right knowledge. O, thou art rooted in truth. May a questioner be ever like thee, O Nachiketas.

Separation of Self from non-Self by being a witness - An Intermediate Step in Spiritual Progress

1-II-13. Having heard this and grasped it well, the mortal, separating the virtuous being (from the body etc.,) and attaining this subtle Self, rejoices having obtained that which causes joy. The abode (of Brahman), I think, is wide open unto Nachiketas.

1-II-14. Tell me of that which thou seest as distinct from virtue, distinct from vice, distinct from effect and cause, distinct from the past and the future.

1-II-17. This support is the best; this support is the supreme. Knowing this support one is magnified in the world of Brahman.

AdhyAropa - Brahman or Self as Antaryamin

1-II-20. The Self that is subtler than the subtle and greater than the great is seated in the heart of every creature. One who is free from desire sees the glory of the Self through the tranquillity of the mind and senses and becomes absolved from grief.

1-II-21. While sitting, It goes far, while lying It goes everywhere. Who other than me can know that Deity who is joyful and joyless.

1-II-22. The intelligent one having known the Self to be bodiless in (all) bodies, to be firmly seated in things that are perishable, and to be great and all-pervading, does not grieve.

1-II-23. The Self cannot be attained by the study of the Vedas, not by intelligence nor by much hearing. Only by him who seeks to know the Self can It be attained. To him the Self reveals Its own nature.

1-III-9. But the man who has a discriminating intellect as his driver, and a controlled-mind as the reins, reaches the end of the path – that supreme state of Vishnu.

1-III-10. The sensory objects are subtler than the senses, and subtler than the sensory objects is mind. But intellect is subtler than mind and subtler than intellect is Mahat (the Hiranyagarbha).

1-III-11. The unmanifested (avyakta) is subtler than Mahat (Hiranyagarbha) and subtler than the unmanifested is Purusha. **There is nothing subtler than Purusha. That is the end, that is the supreme goal.**

2-I-12. **The Purusha, of the size of a thumb,** dwells in the body. (Realizing Him as) the Lord of the past and the future, one does not (henceforward) want to protect oneself. This verily is that (thou seekest).

2-I-13. **The Purusha of the size of a thumb** is like a smokeless flame and is the Lord of the past and the future. He certainly exists now and shall certainly exist tomorrow. This verily is that (thou seekest).

ApavAda - Duality of Purusha entering into bodies as antaryamin is refuted or retracted by explaining the final state as non-dual

2-I-10. What indeed is here is there; what is there is here again. **Whoso here sees as though different, passes from death to death.**

2-I-11. **By mind alone is this attainable; there is no difference here whatsoever. Whoso here sees as though different, passes from death to death.**
Purusha as Subtlest

1-III-11. The unmanifested (avyakta) is subtler than Mahat (Hiranyagarbha) and subtler than the unmanifested is Purusha. **There is nothing subtler than Purusha. That is the end, that is the supreme goal.**

Retraction of Purusha being subtliest by defining the size of Purusha

2-I-12. **The Purusha, of the size of a thumb,** dwells in the body. (Realizing Him as) the Lord of the past and the future, one does not (henceforward) want to protect oneself. This verily is that (thou seekest).

2-I-13. **The Purusha of the size of a thumb** is like a smokeless flame and is the Lord of the past and the future. He certainly exists now and shall certainly exist tomorrow. This verily is that (thou seekest).

adhyAropa apavAda in PraSNa Upanishad (Prashna Upanishad)

AdhyAropa - Creation and sense of duality, division of Self / Ishvara

I-4: To him he said: The Lord of all creatures became desirous of progeny. He deliberated on (past Vedic) knowledge. Having brooded on that knowledge, **He created a couple – food and Prana** – under the idea, "**These two will produce creatures for me in multifarious ways.**"

ApavAda - Refuting Duality, as Self is immutable (Unchanging / Indivisible)

IV-9: And this one is the seer, feeler, hearer, smeller, taster, thinker, ascertainer, doer – the Purusha (pervading the body and senses), that is a knower by nature. **This becomes wholly established in the supreme, immutable Self.**

IV-10: He who realises that shadowless, bodiless, colourless, pure, **Immutable attains**

the supreme Immutable Itself. O amiable one, he, again, who realises, becomes omniscient and all. Illustrative of this there occurs this verse:

adhyAropa apavAda in Taittiriya Upanishad

AdhyAropa

II-iii-1: The senses act by following the vital force in the mouth; all human beings and animals that are there act similarly; since on the vital force depends the life of all creatures, therefore it is called the life of all; those who worship the vital force as Brahman, attain the full span of life; since on the vital force depends the life of all, it is called the life of all.

ApavAda - Brahman is beyond words (speech) and mind

II-iv-1: One is not subjected to fear at any time if one knows the Bliss that is Brahman failing to reach which (Brahman, as conditioned by the mind), **words, along with the mind, turn back.**

AdhyAropa - Knowing Brahman

II-vi-1:**He (the Self) wished, "Let me be many, let me be born. He undertook a deliberation.** Having deliberated, he created all this that exists. That (Brahman), having created (that), entered into that very thing. And having entered there, It became the formed and the formless, the defined and the undefined, the sustaining and the non-sustaining, the sentient and the insentient, the true and the untrue. Truth became all this that there is. They call that Brahman Truth. Pertaining to this, there occurs this verse:

II-viii-5: He that is here in the human person, and He that is there in the sun, are one. **He who knows thus attains, after desisting from this world,** this self made of food, attains this self made of vital force, attains this self made of mind, attains this self made of intelligence, attains this self made of bliss.

ApavAda - Brahman cannot be known, as it is beyond mind (and senses)

II-ix-1: The enlightened man is not afraid of anything after realising that Bliss of Brahman, **failing to reach which, words turn back along with the mind.**
Note: ***One cannot know Brahman as it is indescribable***

adhyAropa apavAda in Aitareya Upanishad

AdhyAropa - Description of Duality and entering into something

I-iii-11: He thought, "How indeed can it be there without Me ?" He thought, "Through which of the two ways should I enter ?" He thought, "If utterance is done by the organ of speech, smelling by the sense of smell, seeing by the eye, hearing by the ear, feeling by the sense of touch, thinking by the mind, the act of drawing in (or pressing down) by Apana, ejecting by the procreative organ, then who (or what) am I ?"

I-iii-12: Having split up this very end, He entered through this door. This entrance is known

as vidriti (the chief entrance). Hence it is delightful. Of Him there are three abodes – three (states of) dream. This one is an abode, this one is an abode. This one is an abode.
ApavAda - Everything else is Brahman, a non-dual experience, thereby retracting from everything said earlier.

I-iii-13: Being born, He manifested all the beings; **for did He speak of (or know) anything else ?** He realised this very Purusha as Brahman, the most pervasive, thus: "I have realised this".
Note:

Verse I.iii.11 says something about entering into something, hearing, etc, which means there is duality

Verse I.iii.12 describes of three states of consciousness

Verse I.iii.13 describes non-duality, as self or Brahman does not see anything else, which means it realized itself as non-dual Self in which everything that looked dual was actually the Self. Hence the shruti is retracting from everything that it said earlier.

adhyAropa apavAda in Mundaka Upanishad

AdhyAropa

II-ii-2: That which is bright and is subtler than the subtle, and that on which are fixed all the worlds as well as the dwellers of the worlds, is this immutable Brahman; **It is this vital force; It, again, is speech and mind.** This Entity, that is such, is true. It is immortal. It is to be penetrated, O good-looking one, shoot (at It).

ApavAda - Final State

II-i-2: The Purusha is transcendental, since He is formless. And since He is coextensive with all that is external and internal and since He is birthless, therefore **He is without vital force and without mind;** He is pure and superior to the (other) superior imperishable (Maya).

AdhyAropa - Intermediate state - renunciation of non-Self

II-ii-5: Know that Self alone that is one without a second, on which are strung heaven, the earth and the inter-space, the mind and the vital forces together with all the other organs; and give up all other talks. This is the bridge leading to immortality.
ApavAda - Brahman is beyond Mind and senses

I-i-6: (By the higher knowledge) the wise realize everywhere **that which cannot be perceived and grasped, which is without source, features, eyes, and ears, which has neither hands nor feet, which is eternal, multiformed, all-pervasive, extremely subtle, and undiminishing and which is the source of all.**

II-ii-10: There the sun does not shine, nor the moon or the stars; nor do these flashes of lightning shine there. How can this fire do so ? Everything shines according as He does so; by His light all this shines diversely.

AdhYaropa – duality

I-i-8: **Through knowledge Brahman increases in size.** From that is born food (the Unmanifested). **From food evolves Prana (Hiranyagarbha); (thence the cosmic) mind; (thence) the five elements; (thence) the worlds; (thence) the immortality that is in karmas.**

ApavAda - non-duality

II-ii-11: All this that is in front is but Brahman, the immortal. Brahman is at the back, as also on the right and the left. It is extended above and below, too. **This world is nothing but Brahman, the highest.**

Note: Here the destination is given earlier, then follows the process of renunciation and being a witness to reach the state one is seeking.

[Some work needs to done to make it more clear]

AdhyAropa

III-i-3: **When the seer sees the Purusha** – the golden-hued, creator, lord, and the source of the inferior Brahman – then the illumined one completely shakes off both merit and demerit, becomes taintless, and attains absolute equality.

ApavAda

III-i-8: **It is not comprehended through the eye,** nor through speech, nor through the other senses; nor is It attained through austerity or karma. Since one becomes purified in mind through the favourableness of the intellect, therefore can one see that indivisible Self through meditation.

AdhyAropa - sense of duality - Self is divided and is seated in heart

III-i-7: It is great and self-effulgent; and **Its form is unthinkable.** It is subtler than the subtle. It shines diversely. It is farther away than the far-off, and It is near at hand in this body. **Among sentient beings It is (perceived as) seated in this very body, in the cavity of the heart.**

ApavAda - non-duality - Self is indivisible and imperceivable

III-i-8: **It is not comprehended through the eye, nor through speech, nor through the other senses;** nor is It attained through austerity or karma. Since one becomes purified in mind through the favourableness of the intellect, therefore can one see that **indivisible Self** through meditation.

III-ii-3: This Self is not attained through study, nor through the intellect, nor through much hearing. The very Self which this one (i.e. the aspirant) seeks is attainable through that fact of seeking; this Self of his reveals Its own nature.

adhyAropa apavAda in Mandukya Upanishad

AdhyAropa - Self as different states of consciousness and as Ishvara

3. (The Self) seated in the waking state and called Vaisvanara who, possessed of the consciousness of the exterior, and seven limbs and nineteen mouths, enjoys the gross objects, is the first quarter.

4. (The Self) seated in the state of dream and called Taijasa who, possessed of the consciousness of the interior, and seven limbs and nineteen mouths, enjoys the subtle objects, is the second quarter.

5. Where the sleeper desires not a thing of enjoyment and sees not any dream, that state is deep sleep. (The Self) seated in the state of deep sleep and called Prajna, in whom everything is unified, who is dense with consciousness, who is full of bliss, who is certainly the enjoyer of bliss, and who is the door to the knowledge (of the preceding two states), is the third quarter.

6. This is the Lord of all; this is omniscient; this is the in-dwelling controller (of all); this is the source and indeed the origin and dissolution of all beings.

ApavAda - Self beyond states of Consciousness - cessation of controller and hence indewller different than Self thereby retracting everything earlier said

7. The Fourth is thought of as that which is not conscious of the internal world, nor conscious of the external world, nor conscious of both the worlds, nor dense with consciousness, nor simple consciousness, nor unconsciousness, which is unseen, actionless, incomprehensible, uninferable, unthinkable, indescribable, whose proof consists in the identity of the Self (in all states), in which all phenomena come to a cessation, and which is unchanging, auspicious, and non-dual. That is the Self; that is to be known.

2. All this is certainly Brahman. **This Self (Atman) is Brahman.** This Self, as such, is possessed of four quarters.

AdhYaropa - OM as three States

8. That same Self, from the point of view of the syllable, is Om, and viewed from the stand point of the letters, the quarters are the letters, and the letters are the quarters. The letters are a, u and m.

9. Vaisvanara seated in the waking state is the first letter a, owing to its all-pervasiveness or being the first. He who knows thus verily accomplishes all longings and becomes the first.

10. Taijasa seated in the dream is u, the second letter (of Om), owing to the similarity of excellence or intermediate position. He who knows thus verily advances the bounds of his knowledge and becomes equal (to all) and none who is not a knower of Brahman is born in his family.

11. Prajna seated in the state of deep sleep is m, the third letter (of Om), because of his being the measure or the entity wherein all become absorbed. He who knows thus measures all this and absorbs all.

ApavAda - OM beyond three states

12. That which is without letters (parts) is the Fourth, beyond apprehension through ordinary means, the cessation of the phenomenal world, the auspicious and the non-dual. Thus Om is certainly the Self. He who knows thus enters the Self by the Self.

adhyAropa apavAda in Chandogya Upanishad

Adhyaropa

III-vi-4: **As long as the sun rises in the east and sets in the west**, so long does he retain the sovereignty and the heavenly kingdom of (or similar to that of) the Vasus.

III-vii-2: They enter into this very form and out of this form they emerge.

III-vii-4: **As long as the sun rises in the east and sets in the west,** even twice so long does he (the Sun) rise in the south and set in the north and even so long does he retain the sovereignty and the heavenly kingdom of the Rudras.

III-viii-2: They enter into this very form and out of this form they emerge.

III-viii-4: **As long as the sun rises in the south and sets in the north,** even twice so long does he (the Sun) rise in the west and set in the east and even so long does he retain the sovereignty and the heavenly kingdom of the Adityas.

III-ix-2: They enter into this very form and out of this form they emerge.

III-ix-4: **As long as the sun rises in the west and sets in the east,** even twice so long does he (the Sun) rise in the north and set in the south and even so long does he retain the sovereignty and the heavenly kingdom of the Maruts.

III-x-2: They enter into this very form and out of this form they emerge.

III-x-4: **As long as the sun rises in the north and sets in the south,** even twice so long does he (the Sun) rise in overhead and set below and even so long does he retain the sovereignty and the heavenly kingdom of the Sadhyas.

ApavAda - retracting from everything that is said earlier

III-xi-1: Then, rising from there upward, he will neither rise nor set. He will remain alone in the middle. There is this verse about it:

III-xi-2: 'Never does this happen there. **Never did the sun set there nor did it rise.** O gods, by this, my assertion of the truth, may I not fall from Brahman'.

III-xi-3: Verily, for him the sun neither rises nor sets. He who thus knows this secret of the Vedas, for him, there is perpetual day.

Incomplete

adhyAropa apavAda in Svetasvatara Upanishad

AdhyAropa - finding the cause of Brahman

I-1: Students of Brahman (i.e. the Vedas) discuss (among themselves): **What is the cause ? (Is it) Brahman ? Whence are we born ? Why do we live ? Where is our final rest ?** Under whose orders are we, who know the Brahman, subjected to the law of happiness and misery ?

ApavAda - Brahman is causeless i.e. Beginning-less and beyond time, space law, nature, etc

I-2: **Time, nature, law, chance, matter, energy, intelligence – neither these, nor combination of these, can bear examination because of their own birth, identity and the existence of the self**. The self also is not a free agent, being under the sway of happiness and misery.

AdhyAropa - Duality: Jiva and Ishvara and Brahman are different

I-6: In this infinite wheel of Brahman, in which everything lives and rests, **the pilgrim soul is whirled about. Knowing the individual soul,** hitherto regarded as separate, to be itself the Moving Force, and blessed by Him, it attains immortality.

I-8: The Lord supports this universe, which consists of a combination of the perishable and the imperishable, the manifest and the unmanifest. As long as the self does not know the Lord, it gets attached to worldly pleasures, and is bound; but when it knows Him, all fetters fall away from it.

ApavAda: Refutation of Duality, unity of Jiva nad Ishvara and Brahman

I-11: With the knowledge of God, all fetters fall off. With the waning of ignorance, birth

and death cease. Going beyond the consciousness of the body by meditating on Him, **one reaches the third state, viz., the universal lordship.** All his desires are satisfied, and he becomes one without a second.

AdhyAropa - Duality: Jiva and Ishvara and Brahman are different

I-4: We think of Him as the universe resembling a wheel which has one felly with a triple tyre, sixteen extremities, fifty spokes, twenty counter-spokes and six sets of eight; which is driven along three different roads by means of a belt that is single yet manifold; and which each revolution gives rise to two.

ApavAda: Refutation of Duality, unity of Jiva nad Ishvara and Brahman

I-10: Matter is perishable, but God is imperishable and immortal. He, the only God, rules over the perishable matter and individual souls. By meditating on him, by uniting with Him, and by becoming one with Him, there is cessation of all illusion in the end.

I-9: The conscious subject and the unconscious object, the master and the dependent, are both unborn. She, too, who is engaged in bringing about the relation of the enjoyer and the enjoyed (or between these two), is unborn. **When all these three are realized as Brahman, the self becomes infinite, universal and free from the sense of agentship.**

I-12: This is to be known as eternally existing in one's own self. Indeed, there is nothing to be known beyond this. As a result of meditation the enjoyer, the enjoyed and the power which brings about the enjoyment – **all are declared to be the three aspects of Brahman.**

AdhyAropa - Duality - modifications of Prakruti

II-11: **Forms that appear like** snow, smoke, sun, wind, fire, fire-fly, lightning, crystal and moon, precede the manifestation of Brahman in Yoga practice.

ApavAda - refutation of duality - no modificatios of Prakruti in Atma Sthiti

II-15: When the Yogin realizes the truth of Brahman, through the perception of the truth of Atman in this body as a self-luminous entity, then, **knowing the Divinity as unborn, eternal and free from all the modifications of Prakriti,** he is freed from all sins.
***Note:** The reason for duality and multiple appearance is due to ignorance. It is mentioned in earlier verses*

I-11: With the knowledge of God, all fetters fall off. **With the waning of ignorance,** birth and death cease. ...

AdhyAropa

IV-2: That Itself is the fire, **That is the sun,** That is the air, That is the moon, That is also

the starry firmament, That is the Brahman, That is the waters, That is Prajapati.

V-4: **Just as the sun shines lighting up all space above**, below and across, even so does that one adorable God, the repository of all goodness and greatness, preside over everything that has the nature of a cause.
ApavAda

VI-14: **The sun does not shine there**; neither the moon, nor the stars. There these lightnings shine not – how then this fire ? Because He shines, everything shines after Him. By His light all this shines.
Note: In earlier verses it is said that NirguNa Brahman is superior than saguNa Brahman

III-7: **Higher than this Personal Brahman is the infinite Supreme Brahman**, who is concealed in all beings according to their bodies, and who, though remaining single, envelops the whole universe. Knowing him to be the Lord, one becomes immortal.

III-8: I have realized this Great Being who shines effulgent like the sun beyond all darkness. One passes beyond death only on realizing Him. There is no other way of escape from the circle of births and deaths.

Source: *Extracted from*
Sanskrit: Vedanta PrakriyA pratyabhigya, by Swami Sacchidanandendra Saraswati, Adhyatma Prakashan Karyalaya.

'English: Method of Vedanta' by Swami Sacchidanandendra Saraswati, translated by A. J. Alston

adhyAropa apavAda in Maha Narayana Upanishad

Adhyaropa - Creation, Lord Entering into beings.
I-1: The Lord of creation, who is present in the shoreless waters, on the earth and above the heaven and who is greater than the great, having entered the shining intelligences of creatures in seed form, acts in the foetus (which grows into the living being that is born).
I-6: Sages declare: That alone is right and That alone is true: That alone is the venerable Brahman contemplated by the wise. Acts of worship and social utility also are that Reality. That alone being the navel of the universe, sustains manifoldly the universe which arose in the past and which springs to existence at present.

I-7: That alone is Fire: That is Air; That is Sun; That verily is Moon; That alone is shining Stars and Ambrosia. That is Food; That is Water and He is the Lord of creatures.

I-8-9: All nimesas, kalas, muhurtas, kasthas, days, half-months, months, and seasons, were born from the self-luminous Person. The year also was born from Him. He milked water and also these two, the firmament and the heaven.

Apavada

I-11: **His form is not to be beheld**; none whosoever beholds Him with the eye. Those who meditate on Him with their minds undistracted and fixed in the heart know Him; they become immortal.

AdhyAropa and ApavADa in brief

If we see trend of Mahanarayana Upanishad, it begins with Creation, with Brahma as innermost Self, then it praises many deities with variants in Gayatri Mantra, Narayana is praised as supreme deity, then Rudra (Shiva) is praised as supreme deity. All this comes under karma-kand. Later in the end, sanyAsa is considered as best means to realize Brahman. Here karma Kand is refuted. In next verses meditation on OM is prescribed, which is nirAkAra. Why is shruti retracting everything that it said before? What about all stuti-s and praise of Supreme Godhead (SAguNa Brahman)? Names and forms are retracted and meditation on NirguNa Brahman is advised. This technique is called adhyAropa ApavAda.

AdhyAropa

LXXIX-11: Others **devoted to the Vedic religion say** that sacrifice is the means of liberation. Sacrifice is indeed dear to gods. Verily gods have attained to heaven by their previous deeds of sacrifice. They have driven away demons by sacrifice. By sacrifice those who are hostile become friendly. Everything is supported by sacrifice. Therefore they say **sacrifice is the supreme means of liberation.**

***Note:* MimAmsins do not believe in Ishvara, they believe that Veda is supreme and our Vedic Rites give us Fruits and not Ishvara.**
LXXIX-12: Inward worship or mental concentration is indeed the means of attaining to the state of Prajapati and so that is holy. Those who possess a mind endowed with the power of inward concentration see and realise what is good. Through mental concentration, seers like Vishvamitra created subjects by mere wish. All depends upon this power of the mind. Therefore they say that the power of inward concentration is the supreme means of liberation. *--> Ramana Maharshi's Upadesha Sara, kaya vanga mana* **...**

ApavAda

LXXIX-13: **Wise seers declare that Sannyasa mentioned** as the supreme means of liberation is Brahman, and that Brahman is the Universal Spirit, is supremely blissful, is self-born, is the protector of created beings, is the soul of time, and so forth.

LXXIX-18: (The Sannyasin having meditated upon the Supreme) should concentrate his thoughts on Him uttering the syllable Om. This, the syllable Om, verily is the substance of many great Upanishads and a secret guarded by the gods without imparting to the unfit. He who practises meditation on the Supreme thus with the aid of Pranava after Sannyasa attains to the unlimited greatness of the Supreme. By that he attains to the greatness of Brahman. Thus the secret knowledge has been imparted.

We also have verses like

XII-17: He is the Supreme Lord who transcends the syllable Om which is uttered at the commencement of the recital of the Vedas, which is well established in the Upanishads and which is dissolved in the primal cause during contemplation.

XXXIII-1: The one syllable 'Om' is Brahman. Agni is its Deity. Its Rishi also is Brahman. Its metre is Gayatri. Its use is for the union with Paramatman who exists as the manifold universe.

adhyAropa apavAda in Amrit Bindu Upanishad

Adhyaropa

1. The mind is chiefly spoken of as of two kinds, pure and impure. The impure mind is that which is possessed of desire, and the pure is that which is devoid of desire.

2. It is indeed the mind that is the cause of men's bondage and liberation. **The mind that is attached to sense-objects leads to bondage, while dissociated from sense-objects it tends to lead to liberation. So they think.**

3. **Since liberation is predicated of the mind devoid of desire for sense-objects, therefore, the mind should always be made free of such desire, by the seeker after liberation.**

4. When the mind, with its attachment for sense-objects annihilated, is fully controlled within the heart and thus realises its own essence, then that Supreme State (is gained).

5. **The mind should be controlled** to that extent in which it gets merged in the heart. This is Jnana (realisation) and this is Dhyana (meditation) also, all else is argumentation and verbiage.

ApavAda

6. (The Supreme State) is neither to be thought of (as being something external and pleasing to the mind), nor unworthy to be thought of (as something unpleasant to the mind); nor is It to be thought of (as being of the form of sense-pleasure), but to be thought of (as the essence of the ever-manifest, eternal, supreme Bliss Itself); that Brahman which is free from all partiality is attained in that state.

8. That alone is Brahman, without component parts, without doubt and without taint. Realising "I am that Brahman" one becomes the immutable Brahman.

9. (Brahman is) without doubt, endless, beyond reason and analogy, beyond all proofs and causeless knowing which the wise one becomes free.

10. The highest Truth is that (pure consciousness) which realises, "There is neither control of the mind, nor its coming into play", "Neither am I bound, nor

am I a worshipper, neither am I a seeker after liberation, nor one-who has attained liberation".

AdhyAropa and apavAda in verse 7

7. One should duly practise concentration on Om (first) through the means of its letters, then meditate on Om without regard to its letters. Finally on the realisation with this latter form of meditation on Om, the idea of the non-entity is attained as entity.

adhyAropa

One should duly practise concentration on Om (first) through the means of its letters

apavAda

then meditate on Om without regard to its letters.

adhyAropa apavAda in Brahma Upanishad

Note: *Brahma Upanishad is mentioned in Chandogya Upanishad*

AdhyAropa - Creation

1. Om ! Shaunaka, householder of fame, once asked Bhagavan Pippalada of Angira's family: In this body, the divine city of Brahman, installed, **how do they create ? Whose glory does this constitute ?** Who is he who became all this glory ?

SutrAtmA

8. By It all this (universe) is transfixed, as a collection of gems is stringed together on a thread. The Yogi who is the knower of all Yogas and the seer of truth should put on this thread.

Self is Witness, has no attributes

16. **The One Lord (self-effulgent) in all beings remaining hidden**, all-pervading and

the Self of all beings, controlling and watching over all works (good or bad), living in all creatures and the **Witness** (i.e. neither the doer of any acts nor the enjoyer), **the Supreme Intelligence, the One without a second, having no attributes.**

Activity of Jiva

20. As the spider weaves out the web and again withdraws it, so the Jiva comes out to and goes back again to the wakeful and dreaming states respectively.

apavAda

26. **From which without reaching It, the speech falls back with the mind,** that is the transcendental Bliss of this embodied being, knowing which the wise one is released (from all bondage).

adhyAropa apavAda in Kaushitaki Brahmana Upanishad

adhyAropa - Jiva as doer, enjoyer and sufferer of his deeds

I-2. He said : '**Whoever depart from this world, all get to the moon.** In the earlier half (of the lunar month) it (the moon) flourishes on their vital breaths; in the later half, it causes them to be reproduced. The moon verily is the door of the heavenly world. Who so answers it (aright), him it sets free (to go further). (but) him who does not answer, having become rain, (it) rains down here. Here he becomes a worm or an insect or a fish, or a bird, or a lion, or a boar, or a snake or a tiger or a person or some other in this or that condition according to his deeds and knowledge. Him who has come thus, one asks: 'Who are you ?' He should reply:
Witness (Agent)

'O seasons, from the Resplendent (moon) the seed has been gathered as it was falling from the fifteen-fold (the half lunar month) from the home of the fathers. As such, **put me in a man as an agent.** With the man as an agent, in a mother infuse me.

I-4. ... He comes to the river Viraja. He crosses it with his mind alone. There he shakes off his good and evil deeds. His dear relations succeed to the good deeds, those not dear to the evil deeds. Then just as one driving a chariot looks at the wheel of the chariot, **so he looks upon day and night; so upon good deeds and evil deeds and upon of pairs of opposites**.
apavAda - Knower of Brahman is devoid of good and evil deeds

I-4. ... Then just as one driving a chariot looks at the wheel of the chariot, so he looks upon day and night; so upon good deeds and evil deeds and upon of pairs of opposites. Thus he, **the knower of Brahman, devoid of good deeds, devoid of evil deeds, goes on to Brahman.**

adhyAropa apavAda in subAla Upanishad

(cited by rAmAnuja)

adhyAropa

1.1-3 The Unqualified Brahman: They say – 'What existed ?' He replied 'Neither the existent nor the non-existent. From that Tamas was born; from Tamas was born Bhitadi (Prakriti – Matter), from it space, from space air, from air fire, from fire water and from water earth.

This became the Egg; which existing for just a year became two-fold – earth below and sky above. Between was Divine Man with a thousand heads, eyes, feet and arms (Virat-purusha).

4-6 He at first created the death of all creatures, having three eyes, heads and feet, armed with an axe. Brahma was afraid – he entered Brahma himself, he created seven mental sons – they created seven Virats, the pro-creators.

apavAda

1.4 At the end, becoming Vaisvanara (fire), he burned (destroyed) all creatures – earth was absorbed in water, water in fire, fire in air, air in ether, ether in sense organs, they in subtle elements, they in Prakriti, Prakriti in Mahat, Mahat in Avyakta, Avyakta in Akshara, Akshara in Tamas, it in God. Then there is neither existent nor non-existent. This is the doctrine of dissolution (as given in) Vedas.

adhyAropa apavAda in tejo-bindu Upanishad

(dikipA by nArAyaNa tIrtha)

adhyAropa

1.1 PARAM-DHYANA (the supreme meditation) should be upon Tejo-bindu (the seed or source of spiritual light), which is the Atma of the universe, which is seated in the heart, **which is of the size of an atom**, which pertains to Shiva, which is quiescent and which is gross and subtle, as also above these qualities.

1.5. Therefore know it is the greatest of mysteries, without sleep and without support. It is very subtle, of the form of Soma and is the supreme seat of Vishnu.

1.7. That seat is without Upadhi and is above the reach of speech and mind. It is Svabhava (Self or nature) reachable only by Bhava (being).

1.8. The indestructible seat is associateless, without bliss, **beyond mind**, difficult to perceive, emancipated and changeless. **It should be meditated upon as the liberated**, the eternal, the permanent and the indestructible.

Note: *Here without bliss means, beyond the reach of experiencing bliss separately, as it is beyond mind.*

apavAda

1.10. It is void and non-void and beyond the void and is abiding in the heart. **There is (in It) neither meditation nor meditator, nor the meditated, nor the non-meditated.**

1.11. It is not the universe. It is the highest space; it is neither supreme nor above the supreme. It is inconceivable, unknowable, non-truth and not the highest.

adhyAropa

1.2. That alone should be the Dhyana of the Munis as well as of men, **which is full of pains,** which is difficult to meditate on, which is difficult to perceive, which is the emancipated one, which is decayless and which is difficult to attain.

apavAda

1.12. It is realised by the Munis, but the Devas do not know the supreme One. Avarice, delusion, **fear,** pride, passion, anger, sin;

1.13. Heat, cold, hunger, thirst, thought and fancy – **(all these do not exist in It).** (In It) there is no pride of (belonging to) the Brahmana caste, nor is there the collection of the knot of salvation.

1.14. (In It) there is no fear, no happiness, no pains, neither fame nor disgrace. That which is without these states is the supreme Brahman.

adhyAropa apavAda in bAhvrica (Bahvricha) Upanishad

(commented by appaya dikshita and bhAskararAya)

adhyAropa

1. Om. **The Goddess was indeed one in the beginning. Alone she emitted the world-egg**. (She) is known as Love's Part (IM). (She) is known as the half-syllabic instant after OM.

2. Of Her was Brahma born; was Vishnu born; was Rudra born. All wind-gods were born, ...

apavAda

5. She alone is Atman. **Other than Her is untruth, non-self.** Hence is She Brahman-Consciousness, **free from (even) a tinge of being and non-being.**

adhyAropa apavAda in maitrayAni Upanishad

(Maitrayaniya SAkhA of Sukla yajUrvEda - considered as authentic upanishad)

adhyAropa

PRAPATHAKA ONE:
He bowed and said, 'Sir, **I am ignorant of the self.** You know it; **please impart it'.**

apavAda

PRAPATHAKA TWO:

...This indeed, is your self'... *(meaning you already exist as Self)*

...He replied: 'It cannot be described. This one, bound by external causes, going upward, suffering and yet not (really) suffering, dispels ignorance like the sun dispelling darkness. The tranquil one rising from this body and approaching the supreme, manifests itself in its own essence, immortal, fearless.

adhyAropa

PRAPATHAKA ONER:

'Sir, **what is the use of enjoyment in this body** which smells badly and is a mass of bones, skins, etc., attacked by lust, anger, etc., separation from near and dear people, hunger, thirst etc. We see that all this is decaying, like flies and mosquitoes which live and die.

apavAda

PRAPATHAKA FOUR:

Just as fire without fuel dies in its own source, so the mind by the dying of its modes, calms down in the source. **The modes of mind, withdrawn, of the lover of Truth, not deceived by sense objects, are false.**

adhyAropa apavAda in atharvaSirasa Upanishad

(Cited by rAmAnuja, MAdhva and srikAnta, dipikA by Sankarananda and NArAyaNa)

adhyAropa and apavAda

[In the Atharvasiras Upanishad, the three syllable letter, which has meaning and also does not have meaning and which is perennial stands alone. It is told that it is the basis of everything and there is no basis for it.]

2. He replied: "I alone was in the beginning; I am now; and will be in the future. There is none but me."

4. (He said): "I am eternal and non-eternal ... I am perishable and imperishable... I alone exist.
---

52. Next, why is it called All Pervading (Sarvavyapi)? Because by mere recitation, it makes the aspirant Omnipresent. Like the oil in the oil-seed, pervading through all this, it, the peaceful Om, remains mingled and inter-mingled together.

53. Next, why is it infinite? Because the mere recitation of it, makes the reciter feel neither beginning, nor end, or up and down, nor across.

54. Next, why is it named Tara? The mere recitation of it enables one to transcend the great four of the trans migratory life consisting of conception, birth, old age and death.

Note: Here there is an effort to explain that initially there was nothing but one supreme entity Brahman, here referred to as rudra. He created all beings and destroys all being. This upanishad also speaks that he is free from pair of opposites. rudra is also called as OM and OM here is defined as nirAkAra, and omnipresent, without beginning and end. The one who chants OM, becomes the same.

This can be summed up as

1. There was only one rudra (Brahman or para Brahman)
2. rudra created worlds and entered into them
3. rudra is praNava (OM)
4. The one who chants OM becomes omnipresent, without beginning and end.
5. rudra is always one and will remain one.

The journey is from one to many and back to one.

adhyAropa apavAda in atharvaSikhA Upanishad

(dipikA by nArAyaNa tIrtha, SankarAnanda and bhASya by ranga rAmAnuja munI, accepted by Saiva-s)

adhyAropa

1.1 The sages Pippalada, Aangiras and Sanath Kumara approached the great God like sage, Atharva Maharshi and asked him, "Oh, God like sage, what is the chief aspect of meditation? **What is the mantra (holy syllable) on which to meditate?** Who can meditate? Who is the God of meditation?"

1.2 The sage Atharva replied to them," Mainly meditation has to be done on the single letter Om. It itself is the mantra for meditation. The four legs of that mantra are the four

devas and the four Vedas. **The letter has to be recognized as the Para Brahman** (Ultimate reality) and meditated upon.

1.3 to 1.6 explain a, u, m and crescent moon of OM.

1.7 The first is the red Brahma (creative aspect) , the second the holy white Rudra (destructive aspect), the third the black Lord Vishnu (the administrative aspect) and the fourth which is like lightning is the multi coloured Purushothama (best among males).

1.8 This Omkara has four legs and four heads (fires). **The fourth is the half syllable sound of "Ma" which is hidden. That is pronounced in a small short form,** slightly extended form (pluthyaga) and much extended form. It is pronounced as Om with one mathra, Om in two mathras and Om in the extended three mathras (mathra is the unit of pronunciation).

apavAda

1.9. **The fourth peaceful half syllable** is hidden in the long ended pronunciation. It is the incomparable glitter of the soul. **It is that sound which was never there and which will be never there.** ...

Note: Here the trend is

1. Explain Pranav OM, it's 4 parts. 3 parts of OM are associated with Brahma, Vishnu, Mahesh and the fourth part is purushottama.
2. Fourth part is further divided into the chandrabindu and the silence after it.
3. Silence indicates transcending everything including trinity of Gods.

adhyAropa apavAda in paingala Upanishad

(Cited by Adi Sankara)

adhyAropa

I-1 ...Instruct me in regard to the **supreme mystery of Aloneness.**

I-2. The eminent Yajnavalkya replied: Dear one, **in the beginning this (Brahman) indeed existed. It was the eternally free, immutable, everlastingly one, secondless Brahman, full of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss.**

I-6 **...From that Self (Virat) arose** ether; from the ether, air; from air, fire; from fire, water; from water, earth. These five root-elements are composed of the three Gunas.

apavAda

I-3. **In it existed the primordial and indefinable Prakriti,** consisting of Gunas in a state of equipoise, red, white and dark, resembling (the existence of) water, silver, a man and outlines (respectively) **in the mirage oyster-shell, a stump and a mirror; what was reflected in it was the Witness Consciousness.**

II-9. Texts like Tattvamasi declare the identity with Brahman of the real Jiva concealed by ignorance and part of the unmanifest; not of the other two, the empirical and the illusory Jivas (in the waking and dream-state).

adhyAropa apavAda in Srimad BhAgavatam

AdhyAropa - Brahman with Attirbutes - Krishna as person - quest for Self Realization through karma and bhakti

SB 10.14.4: **My dear Lord, devotional service unto You is the best path for self-realization**. If someone gives up that path and engages in the cultivation of speculative knowledge, he will simply undergo a troublesome process and will not achieve his desired result. As a person who beats an empty husk of wheat cannot get grain, one who simply speculates cannot achieve self-realization. His only gain is trouble.

SB 10.14.5: **O almighty Lord, in the past many yogis in this world achieved the platform of devotional service by offering all their endeavors unto You** and faithfully carrying out their prescribed duties. Through such devotional service, perfected by the processes of hearing and chanting about You, they came to understand You, O infallible one, and could easily surrender to You and achieve Your supreme abode.

SB 10.14.22: Therefore this entire universe, which like a dream is by nature unreal, nevertheless appears real, and thus it covers one's consciousness and assails one with repeated miseries. This universe appears real because it is manifested by the potency of illusion emanating from You, **whose unlimited transcendental forms are full of eternal happiness and knowledge.**

ApavAda - Self Cannot be realized through karma or Bhakti but by removal of ignorance, which is root cause of bondage. Concepts of bondage and freedom are due to ignorance.

SB 10.14.26: **The conception of material bondage and the conception of liberation are both manifestations of ignorance.** Being outside the scope of true knowledge, they cease to exist when one correctly understands that the pure spirit soul is distinct from matter and always fully conscious. At that time bondage and liberation no longer have any significance, just as day and night have no significance from the perspective of the sun.

SB 10.14.27: **Just see the foolishness of those ignorant persons who consider You to be some separated manifestation of illusion** and who consider the self, which is actually You, to be something else, the material body. Such fools conclude that the supreme soul is to be searched for somewhere outside You.

SB 10.14.28: **O unlimited Lord, the saintly devotees seek You out within their own bodies by rejecting everything separate from You. Indeed, how can discriminating persons appreciate the real nature of a rope lying before them until they refute the illusion that it is a snake.**

adhyAropa apavAda in chatuHslokI bhAgavat, a part of Srimad BhAgavatam

neti-neti is a part of adhyAropa apavADa. neti-neti i.e. negation is done with presumption of adhyAropa i.e. superimposition of non-self on self. We find it in catuhslokI bhagAvat, a part of bhAgavat purANa BP 2.9.30-36

skanda 2, adhyAya 9, sloka-s 30-36. Here it is called as anvaya-vyatireka
Sanskrit-Hindi-English-Translation Adapted from Gita Press

Sanskrit:

एतावद् एव जिज्ञास्यं तत्त्वजिज्ञासुनात्मनः ।
अन्वयव्यतिरेकाभ्यां यत् स्यात् सर्वत्र सर्वदा ।। २.९.३५ ।।

Hindi:

परमात्माके तत्वको जाननेकी इच्छावले [इच्छा रखनेवाले] मनुष्यको अन्वय और व्यतिरेक से (अर्थात् विधिरूपसे अर्थात् 'परमात्मा ऐसे है', 'परमात्मा ऐसे है', - वह भावसे तथा निषेधभावसे अर्थात् 'परमात्मा वैसे नही है', 'परमात्मा ऐसे नही है', 'परमात्मा ऐसे नही है' [अर्थात् नेति-नेति पद्धतिसे, सिद्धान्तसे] - ऐसे भावसे) इतना ही जानना जरूरी है की (परमात्मा हीं) सर्वदेश और सर्वकालमें विद्यमान हैं - २.९.३५

English:

That which is [concluded] with the help of anvaya (co-presence) and vyatireka (co-absence) to be always [existing] everywhere, that indeed [is this self]. Only this much is [needed] to be known by one desirous of knowing the truth of the self.

OR

It is enough for those who wish to know the true nature of Atman that, that which exists at all places, at all times after applying the process of anvaya [1] and vyatireka [2] is Atman only.

[1] anvaya is present as cause in each kArya (action, effect)
[2] vyatireka is, to remain as a cause of everything after negating effect. i.e. that which remains after neti-neti (not this-not this)

For example, in waking etc states, Atman, which is sAkshi (witness) of these states is the

cause, hence it is anyava of Atman in waking etc states and in samAdhi etc, there is vyatireka (negation) of waking, dream and deep sleep.
- srIdhara svAmI

Sanskrit:

एतन् मतं समातिष्ठ परमेण समाधिना ।
भवान् कल्पविकल्पेषु न विमुह्यति कर्हिचित् ।। २.९.३६ ।।

Hindi:

आप उत्कृष्ट समाधि द्वारा [अर्थात् ध्यानसे], मेरा यह सिद्धान्तमें अच्छी तरह से स्थित हो जाओ. (ईस्से), [ईस ज्ञान मे स्थित रहनेके परिणाम से], कल्प-कल्पान्तरोमें भी कभीभी और कहीभी मोहित नहीं होंगे - २.९.३६

English

You (Brahmā jī), [please] follow my opinion with full concentration [and faith], and as a result, you will never ever get trapped in various worlds that you create in various kalpa-s.

More instances of Adhyaropa Apavada in Bhagavat and Uddhava Gita can be found here and here.

I hope this helps one gain clarity of true traditional teaching of AdhyAropa ApavAda.

Two types of sAdhanA can be practiced by Advaita Vedantin

In advaita, there are 2 types of sAdhanA

1. Pratik upasana: OM
2. Neti-Neti (Negation, Self Enquiry)

1. OM

Sadhaka meditates on the mantra OM. By meaning to meditate may first be considered as Japa

So it is chanting of OM. Sadhana begins with verbal chanting, then followed by mental and later followed by just observing mantra OM.

After one regularly meditates, and is able to meditate for long hours, say 3 hours, then OM chanting continues by itself. One does not have to make an effort to chant OM. Even if thoughts come, just ignore them. Even if one is involved in thoughts, if one quickly realizes that one should be aware of OM, then slowly and smoothly shift your focus on OM and just be aware of it. Thoughts will automatically fade away or dissolve. Meditation continues. If OM does not continue, then chant it mentally. After a few chants, it goes on automatically.

For Advanced sadhaka

After on is able to be aware of OM, and the force of thoughts of very less, one can be aware of the source of the mantra. chanting of OM, the pitch, spandan (gap between 2 OMs), uprooting of thoughts and desires is done by OM itself and you as an individual has no hand in it, except that you are allowing it to happen. you allow thoughts to come, do not give importance by neglecting them and be aware of the source of mantra. Now there is transformation from effort to effortless, as one does not chant. When one is putting mental effort in chanting, it is done with the help of mind, but when the chant continues by itself, there is no effort of mind. If chanting is done with the help of mind, which is the obvious thing to do in the beginning, then there will be a saturation point. There is a limit to put an effort. But when there is no effort, mediator remains fresh and can extend the duration of meditation.

This requires God's and Guru's grace. Of course it requires vivek-yukta-vairagya

(renunciation accompanied by power of discrimination - sorry about bad translation), total dedication and moksha as the only goal. If all these are present then meditation becomes easy. Renunciation helps one to neglect thoughts and not give importance to any thoughts. Dedication, faith and surrender to Brahman is extremely important and without surrender, God will not take over your mind in meditation. Entire thing is controlled by God. This takes time, as all these factors may be present but not to the fullest extend.

Just like one can find the ocean shore by moving in the direction of sound of waves, one can go into the source of OM, which is Brahman / Atman. After that even OM rests. There is only you and nothing else. This is advaita sthiti called as nirvikalp samadhi. But again mind rises, as it was sleeping or temporarily subdued, and one is again in duality. The process repeats until everything that is dumped into the mind is uprooted by OM. After that there is mano-nASa (destruction of mind). This is sahaj samAdhi. After this state, when one opens eyes, he / she sees that the world which we thoughts as an illusion, is nothign but Brahman itself (sarvam khalu-idam Brahman --> everything 'Else' is (also) Brahman). Meditation is over. One is Jivan Mukta and has achieved moksha.

Practically, initially, when one is taught - I am not this not this, my family is not mine, my friends are not mine, nothing is mine, etc, one feels that suddenly the joy, enjoyment, ananda, etc is been robbed away and one feels that nothing is meaningful. This is vairagya. It happens. It produces fear and insecurity. When one jumps into this insecurity, one realizes that one is most secured. Slowly the truth unfold, and one gets clarity. After passing through this phase one becomes steady i.e. mind becomes steady.

Advaita asks one to rise from duality. It is said from Atma bhAva and not Jiva bhAva.

Practically, mind becomes peaceful, OM continues in mind throughout the day or most of the day. Peace and bliss unconditionally flow, as they are a result of renunciation and so do not depend upon any external factor. Advaitin lives on minimum requirements. As one advances, mental renunciation increases. One may or may not renounce physically, but mental renunciation is a must.

The Journey

After one has purified the mind with karma-kand and bhakti, one can step into advaita.

The journey of an Advaita Vedantin is:

1. Verbal chanting
2. Mental Chanting
3. A-japA japa i.e. Mantra goes on by itself
4. Mano laya: Experience of Nirvikalp Samadhi
5. Return to duality. Meditation continues
6. Repeated attempts to be in samadhi. Period of samadhi increases

6. Mano-nASa: sahaj samadhi

7. Meditation is complete. After opening eyes, one experiences: satvam khalu-idam brahman - Everything else (this world) is brahman

8. Moksha: Experience of both nirvikalp and savikalp samadhi - Jivan Mukta

9. Videhi Mukti (after death, connection with body drops permanently)

Note:

1. If a person quits body in nirvikalp samadhi, still he attains moksha.

2. There is no technical different between jivan mukti and videhi mukti

2. Neti-neti

This is actual advaita, as taught in Yog-Vasista and Sri Ramana Maharshi. There is no OM. One thinks of Brahman constantly. e.g. is nirvANa shaTaka by Adi SankarAchArya. Some 10 verses on Brahma bhAvanA are given in Vivek Chudamani. In this type of sadhana, one enters into samadhi knowingly whereas in case of OM, one enters achAnaka (suddenly with surprise - again bad translation). But the result is same.

Notes:

This type of meditation is extremely difficult and so most of them take AdhAra (support) of OM. Maandukya upanishad takes about OM. OM is one tatva that can effortlessly take one above maya (as maya was created by OM or from OM). OM up-roots both good and bad desires. So even desires like serving humanity or any sattvik desires are also up-rooted. Even sattva gUNa is a dosha.

Pure mind and renunciation are pre-requisites for Advaita. Hence Advaita is not for everybody. One can purify by doing karma-kand (rituals) and doing bhakti on personal God. Later depending upon prakruti one can shift to either Advaita (for logical reasoning type people) or continue sAkAra bhakti (emotional characters).

Hence advaita do not rejects dvaita but asks one to rise above it. Khandan is done with the intention that one rises.

For Beginners: Please read The Difference between Japa With and Without Japa Mala (External Link)

Is Sri Ramana Maharshi's Teaching Traditional?

There is often a confusion regarding many sAdhaka-s whether Sri Ramana Maharshi's teachings are traditional or not. Many people just stick to the words brahma satya, jagat mithyA. Adi Shankara's life was much much then this. It will be discussed briefly in Dispelling Doubts section. If possible, a new page with will dedicated to the like of Adi Shankara in different light. Traditional people believe that Study of Scriptures is compulsory and that Sri Ramana was neither initiated nor did he studied any shastras. He gave importance to Meditation and Self Experience than shastras. This is due ot incorrect understanding of Mahashi's life and teachings.

As explained in first section Understanding Advaita, Adi Shankara did not just hold on to Brahma satya jagat mithyA. He gave definition of anitya and that definition does not have the word illusion.

So Brahma SAtya Jagat Mithya does not fully reflect Adi Shankara's views.

One has to understand that

1. Focussing on one part does not mean other parts are automatically refuted.

An e.g. will make it clear.

A Husband says to his wife, "I love you'.

Does this mean that, "I hate my mother, I hate my daughter, I hate my sister"??

No. When attending wife, he is playing the role of husband and for time being just focussing only on his wife.

In the same way, Teachings of Sri Ramana Maharshi focus only on Self Enquiry. This does not mean that he does not support scriptures or did not considered them as authority.

Infact Sri RAmana Maharshi when requested by devotees, translated Vivek Chudamani into Tamil, as Tamil version was out of print. Later on he even composed his own shastras like Upadesha SAram and Sad Dasrhan Chalisi (40 verses on reality).

2. Sri Ramana Maharshi also said that one should have Guru

When someone asked that," J Krishnamurti says that Guru is not needed", Sri Ramana Maharshi replied, " Who said so, you can say that after Self Realization but not before"

3. Upadesha-s are given from adhikAra bheda

All those to whom Sri Ramana Maharshi answered were very learned like Ganapati Muni, etc. They had knowledge of shastras and meditated over years. Still they had doubts. It is well known that finally shAstra vAsanA also has to be dropped and after knowing everything i.e. understanding essence of shastras, one has to drop them and practice meditation. To them Sri Ramana Maharshi has given upadhesha-s which would give importance to Self Enquiry.

It should be noted that Sri Ramana Maharshi's teachings are not applicable to everybody. They are only applicable to uttam adhikAri or at most madhyam adhikAri. It is a sad part that now-a-days everything is noted, printed and tossed into wild, that too for free. Internet has it;s advantages, but it has it's disadvantages too.

Not all Shastras are like Bhagavad Gita which focus of many parts. There are other smritis like AshTAvakra Gita, which focus only on Self Realization and rejects everything. It is based on ajAta vAda. Even GAuDapAda taught ajAta vAda in Maudhukya kArikA. Adi Shankara preached vivarta vAda. Doe this mean that both of their thoughts clashed? No. GauDapAda focused on ajAta vAda while Adi Shankara focus on vivarta vAda and at times adopted other vAda too for exlpaining advaita to beginners. Just like Teachings of AshTAvakra Gita are revered with all Advaitins and are not contradictory, Sri Ramana Maharshi's teachings which focus of Self Enquiry are also traditional and found in Ribhu Gita, Yog Vasista and ashTavakra Gita.

4. Sri Ramana Maharshi never claimed that his teachings substitute Adi Shankara's.

Other Acharya-s like SureshvarAhArya, VidyAraNya Swami and Madhusudan Saraswati created their own shastras, commentaries which complement Adi Shankara's teachings. They are never meant to replace traditional advaita. Sri Ramana Maharshi's upadesha-s and his compositions are complementary to teachings of Adi Shankara and hence complementary to Traditional Advaita.

5. Sri Ramana Maharshi did not preached ot live a life like he lived.

Another big problem is that people copy life and actions of acharya-s.

You will find exceptions like

1. Adi ShankarAchArya
2. Acharya hastAmalaka
3. JaDa bharat (from Srimad Bhagavatam)
4. Druv
5. VAlmiki

They all did not had any official training and some were tatva Jnanis without being initiated.

This list includes Adi Shankara too. Remember how he spontaneously composed dasa sloki when upon meeting his Guru Sri GovindapAda for first time, his Guru asked Adi Shankara to give his intro. At this time, he was not even given initiation by Guru GovindapAda.

Acharya hastAmalaka was a mute boy after he was 2 years old and upon being asked by Adi Shankara to describe who he was, he created hastAmalaka stotra. It is the song of realized. Again he was not initiated by Adi Shankara nor was taught any shastras in this life as a boy.

JaDA bharat, was Jnani by birth form due to his sAdhanA in 2 births prior.

Druv was only 5 years old when he left his home. He had little or no formal education of scriptures.

VAlmiki did not knew any shastras but simply chanted Rama nAma that too in wrong way i.e. chanted ma-rA instead of rAma (in reverse order)

So there are exceptions. Each one hold one to one thought or hold on to the state of Self Realization constantly. Sri Ramana Maharshi also hold on to this state on Self Realization.

All these saints are pure by birth and hence need no scriptural knowledge in their last life.

But world copies them. They cannot meditate like Sri Ramana Maharshi did. Maharshi's meditation did not break even when his whole body was bitten by ants and other insects. Bold wa oozing out of his body and whole body was covered with blood. Maharshi was operated for cancer without anesthesia. People cannot remain neutral like him, cannot

meditate like him, cannot stay in Atma Sthiti like him, yet they would copy him and take things for granted.

Fools would say, Since my Guru Sri Ramana Maharshi did not had Guru, I too will not have. Since Maharshi did not study shastras, I too will not and concentrate on Self Enquiry, as prescribed by him. They would say that since Sri Ramana Maharshi did not do any work, we wouldn't. Maharshi took care of his mother and so we will. Ramana Maharshi did not talked to his mother during his sAdhanA days. Since you too are sAdhaka, why don't to take maun when you mother calls? Ramana Maharshi did not respond upto 3 days and maintained maun.

- Maharshi did not react when someone was making his statue somewhere.
- Maharshi did not react when someone approached to him with wet eyes and pain that his teachings on 40 verses on reality are badly interpreted. Maharshi simply replied, 'everyone interprets according to their own understanding'
- Maharshi stopped translating Vivek Chudamani when tamil translation was reprinted again. Later upon request to his devotees after many years he completed translation of balanced verses.
- Maharshi did not build his ashram. It just happened. Later he just inaugurated it and stayed according to divine will.
- Maharshi did not pass on a single comment against Britishers. During his time freedom struggle was at his peak. Yet he did not make any comments against them and remained neutral.
- Maharshi allowed foreigners to have his darshan. He was impartial to all. At one time, when the owners of land started taking 'visiting fees', he simply shifted to another location. He did not fight with them.
- Maharshi allowed animals to freely roam in his ashram.
- Maharshi a;ways remained neutral and in atma Sthiti.

Laymen cannot live like he lived and yet they copy him.

Mahashi's upadesha-s are for advanced meditators and not for beginners. His upadesha-s complement Adi Shankara's teachings and hence complement Traditional Advaita. Maharshi's teachings just focus on Self Enquiry. Thats it. Nothing more than this. To my opinion, they are not universal.

Current (69th) Shankaracharya of Kanchi Kamakoti peetham Swami Jayendra Saraswati declares that Sri Ramana Maharshi was a Jivan Mukta.

Why is renunciation important from beginning?

If you keep giving importance to worldly activities, then thoughts about some thing or something whom you care or hate will some. Then thought process will continue ... one thought after another and one is lost in thoughts. Mantra is lost.

This is the reason why renunciation is important and so we say this world is mithya.

MithyA just does not mean illusion, though it is true from Brahma bhAva or advaita sthiti. But in that sthiti Sri Ramakrishna says one can only live for 21 days. After that connection with body drops permanently. Jivan muktas are the ones who return to this world for the good of all, that too upon instruction and guidance of divine power or Ishwara.

truth = true in all tenses and all states waking sleeping and deep sleep and in turiya
false = not there at any time or any state like rabit's horn.

mithyA = illusion like sea-shell as silver and rope and snake. Mithya also means that one which is not present at all times. So this waking state is absent in dream state and vica versa. Khandan is done with the intention that one develops vairAgya and so does not give importance to it. If glories of mAyA are sung then mind will remain attached and will be attracted towards it. We are taught to be neutral. Rest all is taken care by God

Sri Ramakrishna gives e.g. of pregnant women.

As month of delivery comes nearby, amount of work is reduced. After say 7-8 months very less work is given. After delivery of baby (Jnan), no work is given. Only work is to be with baby (Jnana).

So as one progress God reduces physical work and the responsibility. Always remember, the decision is not taken by the disciple, but Guru orders it. Many times the person himself distances from us, as we reach maturity. Decisions are taken by Guru. Even selecting a path and the way to meditate is decided by Guru. God who is inside us, tackles our mind when we meditate and up-roots desires. Just like we charge mobile for an hour and it goes not for a day, so does meditation charges you and keeps you connected with God even when you are fully concentrating in work. In such case, japa continues in sub-conscious mind. The moment you drop the work i.e. finish it, japa mantra (OM in this case) pops up without effort. Yes without effort. We sometimes listen to a song just before going out and then switch off TV. That song randomly pops up at any time (mostly when we are free). This happens to all our us, no matter how intelligent or concentration power we have or how brilliant one is in studies. If a song can pop up then why can't God's name, whom you have surrendered? If this happens then the mantra has continued through day in sub-conscious mind.

Again, before sleeping, if one does japa and then first thought after waking up is that mantra, then still the mantra has continued. It does not matter if dreams come. God handles it. This is the reason why it all depends upon God's grace. Guru also helps one understand shastras and makes one introvert. Gives direction. Guru is extremely

important.

Not thinking about this world is enough, if we cannot accept that this world is nothing but illusion. As one matures, God will make one experience what Shastras say. Only than doubts will be up-rooted. Until then - Have Faith. Have faith in shastras, Guru and God. Have Faith and say - God Exist. Remember that you only feel lonely when you are not with God.

Consciousness or awareness is important. When one is sleeping, consciousness is in dream state, and so if thieves rob your house, you are smiling, because you are with a beautiful girl.

Where your mind is, is important, and not where your body is.

More you associate with body, more is the consciousness clinged / connected / attached to the body. More you associate with mind, chit or ego more will it be embed into them. If you think that you are Jiva, then consciousness will cling and embed into jiva and one will stay in jiva bhAva. Even scriptures will be interpreted from jiva bhAva. But if one thinks of Brahman and associates himself with Brahman, the consciousness will loosen it's grip with mind-body-intellect-ego, jiva,etc and merge with Brahman.

Just like we clearly see this world and experience it and do not see God, similarly, when our consciousness is merged with Brahman, then one clearly experiences that 'I Am Brahman' and one does not experiences or sees this world.

Also remember that you cannot negate your own existence, so it is not a shunya state, but sat-chit-ananda

Since one has to even detach from own body i.e. detach consciousness body, so even body is not given importance. Khandan is done for this purpose. This is what I feel and understand from my limited knowledge.

Not by parroting or by logically accepting but by merging with brahman one becomes Brahman.

'Direct Experience' v/s 'Intellectual Understanding'

People do not feel any need to meditate and remain satisfied with logical reasoning. They believe in shastras, but do not care to meditate. They presume that they are Brahman. Reading all shastras specially the ones on ajaata vaada may result into this behaviour.

This is a big problem in Advaita. Consciousness is connected with physical body. You cannot prove anyone who claims to be a Jnani that he/she is not a jnani.

Again, surrendering to SELF would give rise to Ego if wrongly understood. Advaitins do accept NirGuNa brahman as supreme. It means that there is something above us. Advaita asks us to rise by meditation to know who you are. As I have said khandan is done with an intention to rise above it and not to presume logically that I am Self' and so above everything and so 'I am not the meditator' hence I will not meditate. Sadly consciousness is still attached to physical body and one cannot experience effortless meditation (a-japA-japa - i.e. OM continues by itself and destroys all vAsanA). But who will tell them?

From the beginning dvaita is not rejected. the very statement that

"Brahma Satyam Jagan Mithya Jivo Brahmaiva Na Aparah" says that Jiva is brahman. It means that Jiva exists (for ajnani, whatever is the reason). Only from pArmArthic satya, the statement that 'I am Brahman' is true as one is speaking from this state.

It is said to do brahma-bhAvanA and not just presume and sit and do nothing more. Meditation, Self Enquiry is the core of spiritual life.

'Negation' not 'Rejection'

There is a universal problem, but in advaita, technically there is no 'other' to surrender or fear to, but the fact is you are still in duality. Advaita asks to rise above dvaita and so things are neglected and 'NOT NEGATED'. Only initially, people are told negative points so they can leave samsAra from mind. Afterwards, when time passes, mind becomes neutral and the issue is left behind, same guru will say, Mr. X or your parents are not faulty. It is their prakruti and so do not have anything negative emotions (bhAva) about them. But this is said to a disciple who has stepped in and passed through the turmoil, but what will Guru say to a new one who has not yet passed through this 'dark night'? Can you see 'Beautiful sunrise' and experience it's beauty, if you do not pass through 'dark night'.

We are taught 'titixA' - titikshaa (be neutral in positive and negative circumstances). So you cannot remain negative about any thing. Being neutral is not negative. Only the one contemplating the advaita way will understand rest all will take the first upadeSa and remain stuck to it, for wrong reasons, forever, throughout their life. What can be done? Unfortunately, when there is no faith, no upadeSa can be given. It is the duty of disciple to approach Guru and humbly ask for direction and clarification.

What is 'Negation'?

Practically, a person has to neglect any impulse of senses or mind and stay calm. Soon the force of thoughts and impulse will face away. Now turn mind slowly and silently back to the mantra OM. Always have faith that OM is capable of up-rooting all desires and take care of anything and everything. OM can tackle all kinds of thoughts. With this faith chant OM. Thoughts will fade away. Be aware of OM, it's beginning and it's end and mind will try

to find source and merge in it. Thoughts that are up-rooted will not come again in mediation. The effect of desires will soon fade away permanently. This process is called as 'negation'.

Reason behind saying everything is mithyA

Many people cannot digest this world as an 'illusion'. We all know that each one of us experience this world. So then what is the reason behind saints emphasizing on 'this world is mithyA'. There are two reason which I can think of.

1. As a guru, you may want to arise your SiSya (disciple) to advaita-sthiti.
2. You speak by abiding in advaita-sthiti

In first case, it is a conscious effort by guru to raise his disciple to non-duality. He knows that his disciple still gives importance to certain things in the world. To remove them from his disciple's mind, guru will emphasize on 'brahma-bhAvanA' - sajAtiya vrutti pravAh vijAtiya tirakruti meaning continuously think of similar thoughts (related to brahman) and do not let worldly thoughts into mind.

In second case, guru or GYAnI is speaking from his natural state, which is non-dual. It is said that the mind of GYAnI is brahman itself. What you see is a projection of your mind. e.g. an innocent person will believe in whatever other person is saying, while a wicked, diplomatic person will never have blind faith in anyone. He will do all kinds to analysis, get more info about the person and only after he gets convinced he will trust others. In this context, a GYAnI's mind experiences brahman everywhere and so he tries to equate everything to advaita-sthiti.

Advantage of Singing or Listening to Bhajans, Devotional Songs, Hymms and Stotras

Bhajans help one neutralize mind. There is an effect of environment. Say when we move into temple, the moment we step in, atleast for few seconds, we will feel peace and a change.

But we do not have the habit to remain silent. Hence thoughts will come back.

In temple,

1. We do not talk about worldly matters so worldly thoughts are not present.

2. Atmosphere is purified by regular prayers, rites and rituals

3. Devotion pours in from hearts of devotees

4. Idol which is consecrated (prANa-pratisThA), has spiritual power i.e. vibrations and God recedes in it after we call him (AvAhana). This also has effect on devotees.

Mind and heart is purified. Same thing happens when one sings bhajans. Devotion cleans heart and removes thoughts.

After understanding advaita, lets dispel doubts and accusations put on by Vaishnavs, Gaudiya Vaishnavas and other schools.

ADVAITA, CREATION AND IT'S PRACTICABILITY

Updated on 7th July 2015

For convenience, the article is divided into two parts

PART I - Explaining Advaita, Theory of Creation and Duality

Lets being by taking some considerations.

1. Two Levels of truths - vyavahArika satya (Practical / Empirical Reality) and pArmArthika satya (Absolute / Ultimate Reality). **Both levels are shruti based.** (Br. Up - II-iii-6)

2. Definitions of real, unreal and mithyA. (refer BG 2:16)

Reality, Truth, satya

That which is eternal, unchanging, present at all times, immutable, undivided, infinite, knowledge is called as as real.

e.g. Brahman

Unreal, False, asatya

That which do not exist at any time.

e.g. rabbit horn

MithyA

That which is neither real nor unreal. This means that it is in between real and unreal.

mithYA is that which is not totally unreal, but is not even real (eternal).

In other words, mithyA is that which is not present at all times. But it can be experienced in any one state.

mAyA is called as anAdi. This means that it is without beginning. but it ends in Jnana. mAyA is triguNAtmikA - that which has 3 guNa-s. Brahman is beyond guNa-s.

Since mAyA ends in Jnana, Brahma sthiti, it cannot be real. We all know that truth is one. Hence there cannot be two things that can be true.

In this sense, mAyA, though experienced in waking state, as real, ends in Jnana.

Experience in waking state are not experienced in dream state and vice versa.

3. Ignorance (avidya) is the root cause. Hence removal of Ignorance is the path of Advaita.

Some Typical Objections

Some well-versed vedAntin-s quote objections raised by SrI mAdvAcArya jI and his successors or of other vaiShNava AcArya-s like SrI rAmAnujAcArya jI on the basic tenets of advaita as propogated by SrI Adi SankarAcArya jI. We would like to say that a great Ex- dvaitin and a celebrated name in dvaita-advaita polemical debates SrI madhusudan sarasvatI jI has answered to all logical objections by writing many independent works. Most prominant one is his master piece advaita siddhi. He and svAmI brahmAnanda (who has written a commentary brahmAnandI on advaita siddhi has kept advaita thorn free. His other works like siddhAnta bindu are also much appreciated and so is his commentary on bhagavad gItA which he writes in his intro that after thoroughly studying SrI Adi SankarAcArya jI's gItA bhASya. He has also defended AcArya SrI harsha's khaNDa-khaNDa-khAdya and also explained bhakti from advaita POV. We advaitins believe that all logical objections are answered by this great advaita AcArya who was also a great devotee of bhagavAn SrI kruShNa.

It is in advaita siddhi that madhusudan sarasvatI has given five definitions of mithyA and also re-establishing one of the definitions of mithyA that which is neither real nor unreal, which even the great vidyAraNya svAmI has also stated the same definition in his pancadaSI.

Questions and Doubts

From pArmArthika level, NirguNa Brahman does not create anything. So how it is said in shastra-s that

- Brahman created this world and became many, etc.
- How can nirguNa Brahman associate with mAyA, the association itself makes it saguNa, hence nirguNa is absent. This voids the definition of Brahman that it is undivided and that the Self was already present.
- If we say that Jiva got deluded or Brahman got deluded, again it would violate the basic tenet of Advaita.
- If we say that Avidya veils (covers) Brahman, and in Jnana avidyA is removed, it means that Brahman was absent and then it is found, so Brahman was not present in-between, hence it cannot be considered as real. On the other hand, if Brahman

is already established, then also the path cannot be started or if we say that we achieve what was already achieved, then it is again a doshA. How can you achieve that is already achieved? Again it violates basic tenets of advaita. How can nirguNa associate with mAyA?

Just to recap - Remember three things –

Relative reality / practical reality / vyavahArika satya
Absolute reality / PArmArthika satya
Ignorance / avidyA

I will also try to be as brief as possible.

The theories of creation, preservation, destruction, one into many are accepted at empirical level only and not at absolute level. They are accepted at empirical level and by the one who is under ignorance.

From Absolute level, there can be no creation. Since the creation cease to exist in state of Jnana, hence this creation is not eternal, hence not a reality.

Creation and duality are not experienced or perceived in Jnana, but they are perceived in ignorance, hence both are accepted as real, but that too from vyavahArika or empirical level only. Since creation, etc cease to exist in Jnana, and is perceived under ignorance, it is mithyA.

Hence, from empirical level, Brahman, creates, becomes one as many, is accepted as long as one is under ignorance.

Why theory of creation is not true from absolute standpoint?

bhagavAn in gItA says:

BG 2.27 ***For death of anyone born, is certain, and of the dead (re-) birth is a certainly...***

This means that anything that is born dies. the definition of real and unreal is

BG 2.16 ***Of the unreal there is no being; the real has no non-existence.*** *But the nature of both these, indeed, has been realized by the seers of Truth.*

Definition of Self is

BG 2.17 But know That to be indestructible ***by which all this is pervaded (omnipresent / all pervading).*** *None can bring about the destruction of this* ***Immutable****.*

BG 2.18 These destructible bodies are said to belong to the everlasting, indestructible, indeterminable, embodied One.

BG 2.20 ***Never is this One born, and never does It die; nor is it that having come to exist, It will again cease to be.*** *This One is birthless, eternal, undecaying, ancient; It is not killed when the body is killed.*

BG 2.21 O Partha, ***he who knows this One as indestructible, eternal, birthless and undecaying*** *...*
BG 2.24 This Self cannot be cut, burnt, wetted, nor dried up. ***It is eternal, all-pervading, stable, immovable and ancient.***

BG 2.25 It is said that ***This is unmanifest (avyakta); This is inconceivable; This is unchangeable.***

BG 2.72 O Partha, ***this is the state of being established in Brahman. One does not become deluded after attaining this. One attains identification with Brahman by being established in this state*** *even in the closing years of one's life.*
BG 6.30 ***He who sees Me everywhere and sees everything in Me, he never becomes separated from Me, nor do I become separated from him.***

Hence we can conclude that

That which has beginning has an end. shruti-s explain that in the beginning there was only one brahman. Then brahman created the universe. Hence universe, jIva-s was created. Hence they suffer from prior non-existence (i.e. this universe was non-existence before it's birth - creation). bhagavAn says that Self does not die, when established in brahman becomes immortal. Self is unmanifested and birthless. If Self is birthless, then who can it be born.

The important definition of Self or Brahman is undecaying, immovable and unchangeable. these three are very important qualities of Self or Brahman. Lets discuss them.

Self is Undecaying / Immutable / Unchanging

Decay is the nature of time. Things decay as time passes and finally gets destroyed. But since Self is not born, it does not die. Since Self does not undergo the process of decay, it indicates that Self transcends time (kAla). All activities including creation, preservation and destruction can happen only if there is kAla i.e. they happen within kAla. Whatever is beyond kAla is unborn and so deathless and hence changeless too. Beyond kAla is non-dual static brahman. In other words in order to manifest, one has to be within the realm of time. Since Self is beyond time, it is in unmanifest form (avyakta).

Self is Immovable / Omnipresent / All-Pervading

Many would argue that being immovable or omnipresent (both have different meaning) does not reduce itself to an inert identity. However, this is not the case. The very meaning of immovable means it is not moving. But why the Self is immovable. Why cant it move? The simple answer it Self is omnipresent and all pervading. this means that Self is already present everywhere. You an only move from place A to place B if you are absent in place B. Again, movement i.e. travel, which is a kind of activity, is withing the realm of time. Since Self is already present and is beyond time, hence there is no need to move, as it is already there.

Lets take an example for better understanding.

We have five great elements. In order of increasing subtleness, they are earth, water, fire, air and space.

Out of five, only earth, which is grossest of all, has a definite shape. Water and fire can be seen and felt but does not have their own shape. If we move further, air, which is subtler than other three cannot be seen. It is invisible (an attribute of Self / brahman). It can only be felt. Moving still further, space, which is subtlest of all cannot be felt, as it is emptiness. You can only infer it. This space is omnipresent and allows other four elements to move within itself. In other words it gives space to even air to move within itself, but itself does not get affected by the smells which air may carry). Hence space is untouched by other four (another attribute of Brahman).

If an element like space can stay in formless state, is invisible, omnipresent, unaffected, then what about the Self which is subtler than space?

To sum up, Self does not need to move anywhere, it is beyond time and omnipresent.

Finally lets understand BG 6.30

BG 6.30 **He who sees Me everywhere and sees everything in Me, he never becomes separated from Me, nor do I become separated from him.**

Talking in brief, by using the word 'see', bhagavAn means to 'know' as both Self and bhagavAn, as brahman (not as a person - refer viShNu and caturbhuja viShNu for more details) are one and the same. Both Self and Brahman are beyond kAla and hence there cannot be any activity of 'seeing' as 'seeing' is within the realm of time.

BhagavAn also uses the words 'He' and 'Me' indicating duality (at vyavahArika plane) and says that both he and me are 'forever united' i.e. they are never ever separated.

Since bhagavAn says 'he never becomes separated from Me' **NOR** 'do I become separated from him'. The word NOR establishes non-duality as none difference is accepted at both sides, else bhagavAn could have said that He (the soul or jIva) merges in me, but I do not merge in him, indicating that jIva is a part of bhagavAn AND not vice versa.

Now we know that activity cannot be done outside the realm of time. Hence words like 'seeing', 'merging' etc are to be taken only figuratively, for the sake of explanation, at vyavahArika plane, as beyond time, there is no activity.

bhagAvan vAsudeva (as brahman) sets a condition of immortality and permanent abiding in him - as 'He who sees Me everywhere **AND** sees everything in Me'. Here too the condition is

- sees me everywhere AND
- sees everything in me

If we consider ourselves a tiny little soul, an aNu, an Atom, then a question arises - How can one see bhagavAn in everything and everything inside bhagavAn? to experience anything, one needs to be conscious of it. Brahman or Self is conscious. Seeing at once the entire brahmANDa indicates that the Self is also omnipresent, else it would takes eons to move in bramANda-s and keep seeing bhagavAn everywhere. Further the ability of seeing everything inside bhagavAn would mean we too need to be omnipresent to know this fact. Only by being formless, infinite and omnipresent can one know the quality of omnipresence.

Again, there cannot be duality i.e. existence of both jIva and brahman, as outside kAla, there is no activity. upanishads and shruti vacan-s like nAsadiya sUkta says that in the beginning there was only one non-dual brahman. Then brahman became many, indicating that the after realizing Brahman as Atman of all, non-duality is confirmed.

bhagavAn later says that

*BG 13.17 And **undivided, yet It exists as if divided in beings;** It is to be known as the supporter of being; It devours and It generates.*

OR

*BG 13.17 And the Knowable, **though undivided, appears to be existing as divided in all beings**, and It is the sustainer of all beings as also the devourer and originator.*

We can conclude that the undivided Brahman cannot be actually divided. In other words the division is not real as it is not eternal. Final state is non-duality only. Hence we conclude that multiplicity is illusion.

From the above analysis we can conclude that the theory of creation is explained from empirical reality or relative reality and not from absolute reality, as shruti-s say that in the beginning there was only one Brahman. This statement which we find in many shruti-s is our 'natural state'. But under delusion, we are not able to experience this state, but due to ego, Self attaches itself with non-self, mind, body, etc and thinks of it as 'I'.

Why do SAstra-s explain the theory of creation?

The goal of vedAnta is to re-establish to existence of SELF as the direct non-dual experience. Each one of us is in dvaita. So the path starts with presuming dvaita, which is self-evident form our day-2-day life. Since we live in duality, hence SAstra-s also talk in 'tone of duality'. It is an inner journey from (presumed) dvaita to advaita, the natural, eternal state.

Since brahman is the only tatva that qualifies for being called as satya, hence it must be self existent in all three tenses of time i.e. past, present and future. That which has a beginning also has an end says bhagavAn in giTA. Hence brahman cannot be born. So the general trend of most principle upanishads is -

- In the beginning, there was only one brahman
- Then this one brahman became many

Shruti Hinting non-duality while explaining Creation

Shruti also accepts the fact the one is under delusion and is in duality. At the same time shruti maintains that the creation is not permanent and hints the truth by saying like, 'though undivided, it is divided', 'Self or Brahman is immutable, unchanging', etc. This means that if we think the creation as real, then the statement 'though undivided' is violated. Hence we will have to understand via yukti that 'though undivided, (it appears to be) divided ..'

If the Lord says, 'undivided, but yet divided through his yog mAyA', then it means that mAyA is illusive power', as if we do not accept this fact, then the creation will be real and hence the division will be real. This will violate the definition of Brahman being 'indivisible'

To sum up, shruti even while explaining creation hints

- Temporary nature, adobe of misery, impermanent, etc ---> mithyA
- Brahman is undivided, immutable, infinite, unattached, unchanging, truth, etc ---> satya

It can be concluded that, brahman is viSaya (object to be worshipped) under and until there is ignorance and not from absolute level.

After understanding the reason behind theory of creation, let us understand why contradictory statements are true, but from different standpoints - empirical / relative (vyavahArika) and absolute (pArmArthIka). Lets take famous example of cloud veiling sun, which our revered AcArya has explain in Atma-bodha and in hastAmalaka stotram. This example will help us understand why we experience duality to be true and why duality was never the truth at any time. It explains why we lost brahma-GYAna and why we never lost it. How can brahman loose it's natural state and become deluded.

Veiling (covering) of Self by Ignorance

We all experience that clouds veil sun and hence Sun is not visible AND Sun has lost it's

shine.

Sun is veiled means Jnana is lost, Brahman getting deluded and becoming jiva, jiva is deluded

Sun losing it's shine means Brahman looses it's knowledge or nature of shining.

We all accept this from empirical level, as we experience the same, but it is well accepted that the sun was never veiled and never lost it's shine.

To extend this further, it is said that after the ignorance is removed or negated, Brahman is realized. It means that earlier Brahman was not realized that means that Brahman suffers from non-existence, which again violates basic tenets of Advaita.

This argument is not correct, as the veil of ignorance is destroyed at empirical level and not at absolute level. the Self is always present like the sun is always present before, during and after the creation, maintenance and destruction of clouds.

Sun cannot ever be veiled by anything. Also it is wrongly understood that ajnAna is destroyed. Actually it is not destroyed, but negated. Real cannot be destroyed. aviyA is present until Self is not realized, hence it is not unreal too. Hence avidyA is mithyA.

The veiling is also illusionary, as it is only accepted at empirical level, as it is experienced when one is under ignorance. For the Realized, there is no question of being veiled, as there is no avidyA.

To sum up,

Everything that is explained, is under ignorance and they are acceptable when one is under ignorance. Since one experience duality and creation, hence they are real for him. Hence the path is also real and so is the SAstra-s, their study and veiling of ignorance.

The words like' ignorance is destroyed' etc are to be taken as 'seems to be destroyed' and not literally.

Self forgetting it's true nature is confirmed in SAstra-s. The famous statement from sAme veda, Chandogya upanishad, 'thou art that svetaketu' is repeated not once, not twice, but nine times.

The dual statements also point to non-duality.

It is a step by step procedure to raise one to non-dual state. Teaching can only be done on dual tone and under ignorance, the duality of guru-shishya, meditation, observer-observed, etc are accepted. In advaita there cannot be any teaching. But under ignorance,

it is accepted. Hence advaita can be practiced and is practical.

Step-by-step processes like, rising above

- 3 guNa-s
- 5 koSa-s (sheaths)
- 3 SArira (bodies) i.e sthuLa, suxma (sukshma) and kAraNa

only lead to non-duality.

The vachyArtha is duality, but laxyArtha is non-duality. After the final step, as in case of Indra, one dives deep within, experiences 5 sheaths but is not contended and finally gets contended as he realizes is Self as Brahman.

Why the knowledge of Self Realization is supreme?

This knowledge is supreme, as after realizing this, nothing else is needed to be realized. There is a sense of fulfillment, completeness and Ananda, which we are all searching knowing or unknowingly. Again, shruti-s say that once we reach this state, it is permanent and one does not return. After realizing the truth, sAdhanA, Self Study, etc are no more needed, as the purpose is fulfilled and no more needed, as everything happened in ignorance at empirical level.

shruti also says gives the phala of Self Realization as - nothing more needed to be achieved

Then why Teach Theory of Creation if it is illusion?

The direct teaching is not taught, as one is not capable of digesting the fact and the e.g. is chandra shAkhA nyAya

Child is incapable of seeing moon, so mother point to a nearby branch (which can be easily located or spotted by child) , which points to moon. Taking help of this branch, mother points child to moon. It is moon that is important and not the branch. Another e..g is if I point my finger to an idol and say that - this is Lord Krishna, then you, how is unaware of the presence of idol, will follow the direction that my finger is pointing and finally you will see the idol of Lord Krishna.

Everything happens under ignorance, nothing is applicable in state of GYAna

Should I add - ISvara is also an illusion, as we see him only under ignorance. ISvara is endowed with upAdhi-s. Hence ISvara creating this world, his grace, his blessings, etc are real, but under ignorance, until there is duality. ISvara is an empirical reality. ISvara is eternal in the form of brahman.

Similarly one studies shastra-s or is in search of truth clearly indicate that one is under ignorance.

Few words on 'Illusion'

We understand the word 'illusion' as just a momentary temporary phase, which does not last more than a few seconds or say which vanishes in a flash i.e. illusion exists only for a short period of time. So when we are told that this world is illusion, then it is hard to digest, as we live for long, 70-80 years and that we know that this world is going to exist even after we die. Even if we take just our life span, still we cannot believe that this world is illusion. But the word illusion may give wrong signal and it is so strongly tied with the word mithyA that mithyA is also understood as a momentary approach. Sure, w.r.t to Jnana, which is infinite, our life like a drop in ocean and earth as compared to whole whole universe is very small. Hence it makes sense to call this 80 years of life as illusion. Even the life span of this earth and is momentary and of short life as compared to the continuous creation and destruction of galaxies and universes from time immemorial. We see Lord describing this and Veda Vyasa describing the creation and preservation, as if he is having a look at all this play from a bird's eye view. Rishi-s have such a broad vision. But do we hav that vision too? Since we lack this vision, which is of course natural, hence we find this world as illusion not acceptable

Neo Philosophy

It is said that Neo Vedanta or Neo Advaita is not traditional advaita. I agree, but not fully. It considers SAguNa Brahman or mAyA as something positive and not illusion. But should I say that Neo-philosophy teaches or better focuses, a lot on empirical reality and ways to rise above adapting bottom-down approach. So let it be.

According to me, what I will consider any philosophy as 'Neo' when it does not take into account

1. adhikAra bheda
2. Four Pre-requisites
3. Three Levels of truths
4. Different updesha-s for people with different temperaments and mental make-up
5. Necessity for sAdhanA and hence aparoksha anubhuti (direct experience of Self Realization)

6. Necessity for Guru and shastra-s, for all including the once who are under ignorance.
7. Self Study (abhyAsa)
8. Only limited to establishing truth psychologically.

Sri Ramana Maharshi's theory can be applied in a way that it does not contradict shastra-s and one reaches non-dual state. Sri Ramana Maharshi's way of approach is found similar to srI vidyAraNya svAmI's teachings in panchdaSI. 'Who am I' is mentioned by Adi SankarAcArya in his prabOdh sudhAkara (pra. su. 151). Search for 'Who am I' is also found in yOga vasisTA and in ribhu gItA.

Advaita has been wrongly understood as it has been looked from Absolute POV, where you do not need to do anything, as the purpose is fulfilled. However, if we talk about sAdhanA, then we will have to think about this world and how to rise above it. In this way when we focus on sAdhanA, we will find that Sri Ramana Maharshi's instructions are very beneficial and compliment to Classical Advaita.

Un-purified mind when reads too much about the above explained approach of illusion, snatches away all the bhakti, and God's glories. Hence let us think positively. Let us accept that we are under ignorance and though momentarily, let us try to remove this ignorance.

PART II - Positive Approach

So, now lets take it positively.

Since we all are under ignorance and not Jnani-s, so it is not proper to say in such a manner.

Practical Advaita

Advaita would be meaningless, if there was only one level - pArmArthika satya and vyavahArika satya has no place.

But thankfully vyavahArika satya is wholeheartedly accepted and is used extensively to neutralize contradictions.

We are all under ignorance, hence accepting, Ishvara (SaguNa Brahman), his grace, bhakti, surrender, shastra-s, guru, and spiritual path (meditation) all are accepted AND considered REAL. They are REAL for US.

So lets start this journey and remove the ignorance, pray to Lord to remove the ignorance, to destroy the ignorance, to obtain his grace directly and via Guru and shastra-s. Let us chant his holy name. Let us not forget that we are under ignorance and hence it is not proper to just think of this world as illusion. It will be just an empty talk. After one realizes, there will be no second, hence he will also not talk to us in the same way to lift us, but he will make sincere attempt to arise us step by step.

Adi Shankara - The Jagad Guru

Adi Shankara knew this, hence he repaired temples, reinstalled Jaganath temple, wrote commentaries on prasthAntrayi, wrote commentaries on Patanjali Yoga (YOga TArAvali) and Tantra (PrapanchsAra Tantra). He also composed many hyms dedicated to various deities and also accepted karma kand and encouraged it upto certain extend. All this he did to cover all types of people having different temperaments and mental make-up.

Advaita is not for everybody

The fact that Advaita is not for everybody is evident from the fact that he had only four disciples - the undisputed winner, the one who traveled length and breath of India and debated with many had just 4 disciples. Rest all were devotees, follower or admirers.

Adi Shankara knew that not all can accept advaita, hence he only opposed other systems w.r.t final goal and he did not negate the path itself. The final destination according to advaita is NirguNa Brahman.

Since Advaita is difficult to understand, Adi Shankara created many prakaraNa grantha-s which teach the basics. But even in Tatva Bodh, which is considered by many as the most basic and first to be read also starts with adhekAra or qualities or pre-requisites. Anyone who has these qualities or pre-requisites is an introvert person. Gita starts with Arjuna ViSAda yoga and begins with a mohAndha (DritarAShTra) and Arjuna ends with nasTO mohA smrutir labdhA ...

Lets return to practical world and start our journey with Prayers

Without the grace of mAyA, and Lord Jaggannath, noting is possible. Let us pray to the great almighy Lord for our own progress and for the whole of humanity.

Let us not keep saying the word 'mithyA' without realizing the mithyAtva. Lets apply mithyA into our real life. Consider defects in this world and always think of this world as impermanent and abode of sorrows. Only refuge at lotus feet of Lord can save us and make us cross the terrible ocean of samsAra.

Hari OM

Q & A

[Updated on: 15-Sept-2016] - *Added Q-5: Does advaita accept the existence of jIva?*
[Updated on: 22-June-2016] - *Added Q-14: Is assuming this world as illusion or unreal enough? Does it not contradict day-2-day experience?*

Q & A

This page displays Queries (SankA) and it's Answers i.e. solutions (samAdhAna). Q & A are not arranged in any specific order.

We will denote Query / Question by 'Q' and answer / solution by 'A' or 'S'.

Q-1: Does Advaita allow the practice of yOga?

A: Yes. vidyAraNya svAmI in pancadaSI cites amrit nAda upanishad, which is of yogic nature and explains that yOga is useful for those who are not sufficiently inwardly pure and whose mind is not calm and hence hence are not able to concentrate and practice Atma-vicAra.

sadAnanda yOgindra in his vedAnta sAra describes eight limbs of yOga in brief.

Our AcArya Adi Sankara has written a gloss on patanjalI yOga sUtra by the name yOga tArAvalI. yOga is helpful to gain concentration and attain sufficient purity. haTha yOga is also practised by many in the beginning.

Q-2: In the example explaining draSya and draSTA and the difference between them, an example of rose flower is given. But it is said that since there are two objects the knower and the known, dvaita (duality) is established. Similar is the case with other examples like clay and pot , etc. How to correctly interpret an example?

A: Upadesha-s should be said and has to be understood from the perspective which makes one introvert.

kuTastha (AtmA / Brahman) is reflected in pot water and is called as chidAbhAsa (jIva). jIva spreads through the body via 72000 nADI-s. jIva with the help of mind and mind with the help of senses becomes extrovert.

Dṛṣṭi though is translated into 'vision' is not to be taken as just 'vision'. By vision, we mean our 'perception'. When we see something, say a golden brick, we add our own value to it. So Gold is not perceived just as a 'metal', but as 'valuable metal'. When we see something, image gets projected inside our brain. This is called as sensation. Brain processes this image and tries to give a meaningful suggestion. This meaningful suggestion is our own suggestion based on information collected in past and our opinion attached to the information. So perception can be defined as 'sensation + meaningful suggestion'.

According to Science, light rays fall on eye lens, are carried onto brain to form an image. This image is the cognised. However our shāshtra-s give different explanation. Mind travels up to object via senses, feels it and then projects its own opinion on the object. Shāshtra-s speak from mental level.

Sensation without meaningful suggestion makes no sense. Any sensation has to be coupled with meaningful sensation. If no meaning can be deduced, mind rejects it. For example, while walking on road, eyes see many people, but do we remember all faces? However, if we spot a known face, say our friend, we will respond to him. We not only see an image of human being, but we see our friend in it. Along with friend, we keep his nature (character or personality and behaviour towards us) in mind while dealing with him. On other words, we have 'an opinion' about our friend. Hence we just do not sense or see, but we 'perceive' in our own unique way due to unique opinion. This perception is based upon our own imagination and preconceived notions. Likewise, what may be important to one may not be important to another. Shāshtra-s call this selective perception as 'likes and dislikes' i.e. 'rāga and dvesha'.

So we do not just see the object, but we perceive it. In other words, mind tries to 'know' the object via senses. Hence seeing (which is actually perceiving) is knowing.

There are two types of images - external and internal (inside mind)

The process of seeing or dRShTi refers to perceiving external objects. This is called as bahir draShya or external image..

sanchita Jnana is that which is already known in past. It means mental reflections present in mind. This refers to internal objects. It is called as antar draShya or images inside our mind or simply images that mind creates.

Ours is an outward journey from Brahman to jiva to mind to 5 senses. Spiritually, our journey is to go back from extrovert to introvert. Both the reflections i.e. external (outside our body - in material world) and in inside us (in our mind) are to be renounced. In other

words whatever is draShya (observed) be it worldly objects or their reflection in mind, are to be renounced and mind has to be turned introvert.

This could be presented as

external objects --> internal objects --> source of both (no objects).

With this as background, lets come back to the question. As per questioner, since rose flower and observer of rose flower are two objects, duality is established and hence non-duality is falsified. another example of pot nad clay infers the same.

If we take this approach, can we reach the source of both (which is the substratum of every reflection). Always remember that vAchyArtha can be dual in nature, but laxyArtha is always non-duality. Hence what an example implies is important. For example, tat-tvam-asi on it's face value implies that are two tatva-s tat (brahman) and tvam (jIva), but it's laxyArtha is emphasized by the word 'asi' ('are'). Hence the statement indicates - 'you are that' or 'thou are that'

Hence we must interpret an example in right spirit that takes us to non-dual plane. If we keep seeing pot and clay will mind calm down and merge in source?

The focus is on clay and not the name and form which is 'pot'. brahman is sat-chit-Ananda all else consists of names and forms, which are once created and are of destructive nature. Pot in reality is clay only. It is clay that we must try to perceive.

Similarly, rose flower example is intended to teach us separation by discrimination. Object of observation is different from observer. Since you 'see' rose flower, hence you cannot be rose flower. In other words, whatever can be seen or perceived separately from yourself cannot be you.

If we take this example further from meditative POV, and take it as a mental phenomenon, we can observe that

1. Object of observation (rose flower) is different from observer.
2. After discrimination, the observer becomes a witness of object (rose flower).
3. Since there is no attachment towards rose flower, one remains detached.
4. Once object fades away, Focus shifts to the 'observer' or 'knower' or 'SAxI'.

3. One dives deep into self. What is left is just 'I'.

So this example, when taken in right spirit helps us to discriminate, be a witness of object.

Q-3: Should one be sceptical in approach? Does advaita teach one to be sceptical?

S: Our intellect should be used in a way that it increases our devotion. We must have full faith in our shAstras and our guru.

Being sceptical is not a solution. While not all westerners have hidden motives, some do have. Also note that meditation is extremely important. Certain things are not cleared even by shAstras. They are only cleared by personal direct experience. Inquiring about your true nature is not sceptical. It is inner exploration to find ultimate truth. Genuine doubts which are naturally created while searching for truth i.e. by doing Self Enquiry or practising neti-neti (not-this not-this theory of negation) or chanting praNava OM are addressed so that one gains clarity, better vision and proper direction on this invisible path.

Q-4: Does advaita make one atheist?

Advaita is connected with last stage of life (sanyAsa ASrama). As Adi SankarAcArya in his TAi. Up. 1/11 bhASya says satyam vada, dharmam cara meaning speak truth, follow the dharma.

Sub-commentaries and further sub-commentaries / glosses on bhASya says that one must practice vedic karma-kANDa, not just once but until one is sufficiently purified. After attaining certain level of inner purification, one is taught to think in an introvert way (vAnaprastha ASrama) and then finally it is sanyAsa of mind. So mind is made introvert.

Now, while performing karma-kANDa, one must have unflinching faith in our shastras or vedas so to say. So bhakti also has to be there. Naturally one must believe in God. Advaita (and vedAnta in general), asks one to renounce these external rites, BUT NOT BHAKTI. Our faith in shastras, god and guru are still there. They need not be renounced. The base has already been setup in karma-kANDa, upon which advaita rests. Hence one cannot say that advaita is an atheist philosophy.

As on regularly performs vedic rites and rituals, faith in God increases. Sattva is born in mind and with it love for God dawns in heart of devotee. How can a path which rest on vedic karma-kANDa be an athiest philosophy?

Q-5: Does advaita accept the existence of jIva?

Yes. Advaita does accept the existence of jIva. Adi Sankara in tatva bodha and other prakaraNa grantha-s have explained who is jIva i.e. characteristics of jIva. It is also explained in mANDukya kArikA 16, which is a commentary on verse 7 of mANDukya Upanishad. Here jIva is defined as the one who says - "This is 'my' father", "This is 'my' son", "This is 'my' grandson", "This is 'my' property", "This are 'my' animals". jIva, the individual soul, is subject to transmigration, is subject to cause and effect. jIva is 'sleeping' under the influence of mAyA. Here sleeping means absence of knowledge of true Self. The fourth state - turiya is ever awake and is not under the influence of cause and it's effect. jIva has been under influence from time immemorial. No one knows when jIva was born or when mAyA was born. Both are hence considered as anAdi i.e. beginningless and the phenomenon of mAyA influencing jIva or creating universe is called as anirvachaniya i.e. inexplainable. Though the ignorance is anAdi i.e. beginningless, it ends in GYAna. When a realized guru teaches the truth and jIva is awakened from sleep, it realizes it's true nature.

Accepting jIva even in advanced text like mANDukya kArikA, which expounds the highest truth and boldly says 'there is no creation' by preaching ajAti vAda accepts jIva, but only under ignorance. Like jIva the existence of jIva is accepted at vyavahArika level (for a particular class of seekers) and they both are non-existent in the fourth turiyA state.

Q-6: Does advaita say that jIva becomes ISvara?

S: The acceptance of non-difference is due to bhAga-tyAga laxaNa or jahad-ajahad-laxaNa.

ISvara = Brahman + vidyA mAyA

jIva = Brahman + avidyA mAyA

Common factor (Brahman) is accepted and uncommon factor which is vidya mAyA (in case of ISvara) and avidyA mAyA (in case of jIva) are rejected (tyAga).

The word ISvara has 6 upAdhi-s associated with it. Talking as a laymen, God or ISvara is all powerful. Rama and Krishna or Shiva all have their own typical character. We cannot equate ourselves with their character, persona, aishvarya and replicate their acts which are often called as lIlA-s (divine play).

Advaita only sees common factor Brahman in both.

ISvara will merge in Brahman at will and does not need grace of anyone.

Saying that jIva will BECOME ISvara is not correct, as here there is an a-priori of 'I' being jIva. Advaita asks one to question this very notion.

Advaita says, jIva (in reality) is Brahman

Advaita does not say, jIva becomes Brahman

Advaita does not say, jIva becomes ISvara

One does not begin to appear like 4 armed viShNu or Trident holder Siva. One does not become a viShNu or Shiva look-a-like - advaita does not speak of this type of non-difference. Name, form, character, etc are unique to each one of us. No two objects can be exactly same, not even two fruits from same stem.

Q-7: Does advaita accept ISvara / saguNa Brahman / God with form and attribute?

All AcArya-s surrender and revere to ISvara. Kanchi Paramacharya says that without grace of mAyA, one cannot have salvation. It is a custom that whenever someone bows down to a SankarAcArya, they reciprocate it by saying nArAyaNa-nArAyaNa.

It is only the path that does not give importance to names and forms.

Advaita does accept higher authority (brahman), but in formless state.

All vedAntin-s accept bhagavad gItA as authentic scripture and as word of bhagavAn kRShNa. How is it possible that we accept bhagavAn's words but consider kRShNa as 'illusion'? Please think. However, we do not limit kRShNa to any other form of Ishvara as only having a form. Ishvara can stay in nirAkAra svarUpa (formless state). Ishvara can also arise beyond 3 guNa-s by his own will and stay as brahman. kRShNa of an advaitin is not just murlidhara kRShNa, a person, but is also nirAkAra. kRShNa is often called as lahiri (wave) - Ananda lahiri, prem lahiri and saundarya lahiri. kRSNa is beyond guNa-s as bhagavAna in gItA BG 3.28 also says 'गुणा गुणेषु वर्तन्त' 'guNA guNesu vartanta' means guNa-s act among themselves. Hence bhagavAn is beyond guNa-s and is of non-dual nature.

BG 3.28 can be explained as: The gunas of prakriti – sattva, rajas and tamas – which are the constituents of the sense organs, come in contact with the very same properties of prakriti which also constitute the object of sense. So the object and the subject come in contact with each other because of the fact that both are constituted of the same substance, prakriti – sattva, rajas, tamas.

yOgi-s gives importance to kuNDalini, while advaita considers it as an illusion and hence neglects it. This does not mean that kuNDalini of an advaitin is not activated. It is, but that part is not focused by advaitin. A yOgi / Sakta / tAntrika will intentionally arise kundalini to sahasrAra, whereas an advaitin or a bhakta will not make any special effort to arise kunDalini. It rises by herself. Until one is not beyond mAyA, one keeps experiencing what others are experiencing, but by not giving importance to experiences, one stays neutral and stable. In this way, one remains rooted in Self.

Also saying that ISvara dies is not correct. It is like saying, when snake renounces it's skin, it dies.

Adi Sankara has many times attributed his reverence to Vishnu / Krishna. In PrabOdha sudhAkara, his lesser known work, Adi Sankara says that there are two ways of worship - bhakti and Jnana. In fact he says that there are three ways to reach absolute - mind and breath control (yOga), devotional worship (upAsanA) and disassociation with non-Self through viveka.

From practical reality, we do revere all forms of God with dAsa bhAva. Only from absolute reality, we focus more on nirguNa aspect which is an adobe of peace and bliss.

Remember the example of Sun veiled by clouds? Both views, sun being veiled and sun never being veiled are true but from different standpoint.

Advaita is not atheist philosophy, one does not become a viShNu or Siva look-a-like, nor does ISvara die and ofcourse, advaita accepts ISvara. another mis-belief is that jIva dies when it merges in Ishvara (Brahman). this is not true. One does not experience death. throughout the entire process from being an observer (witness) to becoming aware of non-dual state, 'I' never cease to exist. Infact all experiences occur only because of 'I', which is consciousness. It is only we who think that we are not consciousness or that we are bound by 5 bodies and make ourselves limited. In reality, when the attachment with body, mind, intellect and ego is destroyed, 'I' is freed from being caged by them. One abides in true nature, which is non-dual. This state is indescribable, but for sake of explanation it is described.

Q-8: Did Adi Sankara and advaita consider Siva and viShNu an non-different (abheda)?

A: Yes. Adi Sankara in his viShNu sahasranAma bhASya, while explaining meaning of attributes 27 Siva, 114 rudra, 491 maheshvara and 505 soma, explains non difference between them. While explaining 27 Siva, Adi Sankara cites Kaivalya. Up 8 to indicate non-duality of Siva and viShNu. While explaining 114 rudra, Adi Sankara cites Siva purANa to explain non-difference. Adi Sankara further says that Siva is rudra and is the cause of all (parakAraNa). For more details, please visit here

In mAyA pancakam, Adi Sankara indicates non-difference between brahma, viShNu and Siva

Bramayathi hari hara bhedha bhava,

Nagathitha ghatanaa patiyasi maya. 5

Who know that laws do not tell of the differences between Vishnu and Shiva, Delude themselves and make them see differences in Shiva and Vishnu - 5

Similarly in praSna uttara ratna mAlikA, Adi Sanakra says

Bhagavadavataarah kashcha bhagavaan?

Maheshah shankaranaaraayanaatmaikah

Q: Who is Bhagavaan?

A: The one Supreme Lord in whom Shankara and Naraayana are united.

(part of question 65)

In a lesser known work prabOdh sudhAkara, Adi SankarAcArya says that Brahman is both with with and without attributes. Our AcArya cites brihadAraNyaka upanishad (pra. su. 169-170). AcArya also cites BG 12.5.

Notes:

Commenting on BG 12.5 our AcArya says that for those whose consciousness is strongly embedded in physical body, the struggle is greater. He does not say that the path is difficult for all.

In moha mudgara, popularly known as bhaja govindam, AcArya says *bhaja govindam, bhaja govindam, govindam bhaja* ***mUdhA*** *madhe*. Here the word 'mUdha' indicates the one whose consciousness is strongly embedded in physical body. In simple words, the one who considers himself as body is called as mUdha. Many wrongly translate 'mUdha' as 'fool' and some like Srila Prabhupada translates it as 'rascal'. The reason for composition of moha mudgara (Bhaja Govindam) is that once Adi Sankara saw an old man givin advaita instruction and remaining engrossed in debates. But this old man did not speak from experience. He was not detached from his own body. Instructions were purely intellectual. Hence Adi Sankara spontaneously composed Bhaja Govindam. This was in accordance with BG 12.5 and 12.6. Dry Philosophy is of no use. All AchArya-s stressed on experience than

mere philosophy.

Q-9: Did Adi Sankara preached smArta dharma?

It is believed that Adi Sankara propagated smArta dharma. For establishing ultimate truth, Adi Sankara established advaita as the top-most religio-philosophical system. Advaita by it's nature negates duality. However, advaita rests on the foundation of duality. Other systems like vedic karma kANDa, purANA-s and various Agama SAstra-s are also supported by Adi Sankara, as advaita is not suitable for all. Other systems are used upto a point until sufficient inner purity is achieved. After that comes, the nivritti mArga, the advaita.

Since Adi Sankara's parents were Siva bhakta-s and Adi Sankara was a viShNu bhakta, it is evident that the equality of all forms of god is only found in smArta dharma. Adi Sankara also has to reconcile the differences in SAstra-s and harmonize them into one system, which was possible through only smArta and advaita.

polemical debates are different and teaching for masses is different. Not all want moxa (moksha), not all are inwardly pure. Not all are sincere in spiritual practices and are not ready to quit worldly desires and objects. As a jagadguu Adi Sankara had to take care of common people who are spiritually inclined to a limited degree.

From viShNu sahasranAma bhASya, it is concluded that Adi Sankara did not considered any difference between Siva and viShNu. Regarding other gods, like tripurAsundari, gaNeSa and sUrya deva, tripurAsundari (Sakti) is the main deity of Sakta-s. Similarly gaNeSa is the main deity of worship of many people. sUrya is the only deity that is visible with physical eye. Adi Sankara added the sixth deity skanda, who is very popular in south. In this way, he blended the worship of all forms of God, considering them as equal and manifestations of supreme brahman. One form of God remains central and is kept in centre. Rest four are on four sides. One member of family can have Siva as his ISTa devatA, another one viShNu, yet another one can have Sakti as his main deity of worship. Option to worship another form of Ishvara is better as each one of us has different liking, different temperament and so different mantras are suited for different people.

His independent compositions like daxaNAmurtI stotra, SivapancAxara stotra, soundarya lahiri, and other independent hymns dedicated to other devatA-s indicate that for masses he propagated smArta dharma. For a small percentage of people, who are inwardly pure due to intense meditation in this life or due to intense meditation and nitya karma, vedic karma in past life/lives, are qualified to practice the direct path - advaita, which is the highest philosophical truth, and can be directly experienced.

Q-10: Did Adi Sankara accepted other religio-philosophical systems?

A: Adi Sankara established Advaita as the supreme goal, param pada. His ISTa devatA was bhagavAn viShNu, but he never denigrated status of any devatA. The word 'demi-god' gives false impression. Adi Sankara never used the word demi-god for Siva and purposefully denigrated rudra or any other form of Ishvara.

Advaita can be practically applied by only purified mind who longs only and only for liberation. For mental purity, other systems like yOga, pUjA archanA, upAsanA, visiting places of pilgrimage, doing nitya-karma, reciting veda-s, practising karma-kANDa, etc are acceptable until one attains sufficient purity to practice advaita.

Q-11: Is Advaita, as preached by Adi Sankara, a covered Buddhism? What is the difference between Buddhism and Advaita?

A: Buddhism has many sub-divisions. The most similar Buddhist philosophy is shUNyavAda, as propounded by famous buddhist nAgArjuna. According to this system, Atman is nothing but void, zero state. They say Atman is non-existence. Advaita disagrees with it. **According to advaita. you cannot negate your own Self.** This Self is indestructible. It is none other than Brahman. advaita questions the buddhist philosophy - who is the the knower of zero state? i.e. know says that Atman is zero state? To make a statement, someone has to know this zero state. It is Atman or Brahman only. In non-dual state there is no one else to experience Atman. To preserve non-duality and to retain supremacy and eternal existence of Brahman, it is said that Brahman is indescribable. Other difference between Buddhism and Advaita is that, advaita accepts veda-s as valid supreme authority (shabda pramANa). shruti is not considered as 'asatya', as long as one is under ignorance. After entering into nirvikalpa samAdhi, one does not need veda-s. It is said in Br. Up. 4.3.22 that in deep sleep, veda-s become non-veda-s. samAdhi is beyond deep sleep. Hence veda-s are authority only until one is in duality. Everything except Brahman is non-existent in the supreme state (nirguNa Brahman). In other words, since the purpose of veda-s is fulfilled or laxyArtha of veda-s is achieved, hence they are of no use when one is established in nirguNa Brahman. As mentioned earlier, supreme eternal status of Brahman is never compromised.

Note: It is widely believed the Lord Buddha rejected veda-s. However, if we carefully understand, it is not what Lord Buddha meant. If rites, rituals, yajna-s, philosophy is what he had rejected, then he himself would not have given 8-fold path, and Buddhism would not have composed it's own sUtra-s like diamond sUtra, Heart sUtra, etc. If they had rejected Godhead, guru and dharma (dhamma), then there would have been the famous mantra - 'Buddham sharaNam gacchAmi, dhamman sharaNam gacchAmi' meaning, 'Take refuge in Buddha, take refuge in dharma'. Hence bhagavAn buddha, as an avatAra, did not descend to delude people from vedic path. We must understand that bhagavAn buddha never rejected importance of philosophy, rites and rituals, discipline, dharma, mantra chanting but the wrong intention with which they were carried out at that time. Often great saints are misunderstood. While we do not claim to understand them, we do not denigrate them.

Many talk of two Buddha-s and give various references from purANa-s and commentaries of AchArya-s. The originator of Buddhism was not the one who had incarnated to delude people.

Q-12: How does advaitin carry out day-2-day activities?

A: When one thinks of brahma-satya-jagad-mithyA, such questions may arise. However, as we are aware, advaita accepts two levels of truths -

1. Relative Reality or lower truth
2. Absolute Reality or higher truth

Relative reality is further split into

a. Practical Reality / Empirical Reality - vyavahArika satya
b. Dream Reality - prAtibhAsika satya

Hence there are three levels of reality. Dream reality is different from practical reality. Dreams are abstract, with no connection to each other. Dreams do not continue from one night to another. Practical reality is continuous. i.e. we continue from where we had left day after day.

Day-2-day work

Rules and verses that are for absolute reality are not to be applied for practical reality. For practical reality, we advaitns follow veda-s (samhitA-s, brAhmaNa-s) and dharma smriti-s. We accept duality on this plane and act accordingly. We do not act foolishly :) . Advaitins are mentally balanced and use their common sense. But we see all this as play. Like an actor will put his heart and soul in his acting, yet he knows that he is not the character, but the 'actor', we understand from logic that we do not cling to any of the worldly issues or persons. We follow what bhagavAn says in gItA about how one should do karma.

While Meditating

When meditating, we try to rise above mAyA and apply all those shruti-vacana-s said from the plane of absolute reality. The separation of from our body is is experienced and this experience and other experiences like constant feeling of peace and bliss are carry forwarded after we come out of meditation and are engaged in day-2-day work. It is like charging a mobile. Charge for 1 hour and it works for 1 day. In the same way, the effect of meditation lasts the whole day, which helps you to not to get involved in any issues or in the work you are doing. On the other hand remaining alert that we do not get attached ot anything helps in meditating in better way.

bhagavAn in gItA says in chapter 14 to rise above 3 guNa-s (last few verses) and in chapter 3, it is said to be in sattva guNa and do the work.

Q-13: Advaita depicts mAyA in a 'negative way', then how is deity worship, and this world being real and praying to ISvara justified since ISvara, the creator too does not exist in nirvikalp samAdhi?

Traditional teaching of advaita is adhyAropa-apavAda, which means, (false) superimposition followed by subsequent retraction.

This can be split into two parts

1. Superimposition
2. Retraction of superimposition

1. Superimposition.

Here, the creation theory is established, multiplicity nature or dual nature of this world is established. to create this world, the creator 'ISvara' who is not affected or who is in total control of mAyA is accepted. Since our mind is attached to names and forms. Praying to a name and form is acceptable. Hence glories of God are sung. When mind become sufficiently purified, then one comes to know that ISvara can exist without name and form as Brahman, which is formless and without attributes. The attributes like sat-chit-Ananda are described figuratively and not in absolute sense. One does not experience them separately. Now comes into picture the second part 'Retraction of superimposition'.

2. Retraction of superimposition

Now the search begins to know the true nature of Self. One asks the presumption does 'jiva' exists. Am I jiva? One is taught to be a witness and separate from what is not 'I'. In this process of neti-neti, all that is 'not-I' is discarded by being a witness to 'not-I'. Finally what remains is pure Self which is limitless and it is not experienced separately. There is only one tatva i.e. Brahman.

So it is in the second phase of teaching that mAyA is depicted as 'something that is negative' not in the first phase when superimposition on Self and Brahman is applied.

Even after one is Self Realized, for the good of all, a GYAnI stays in dual plane and considers himself as jIva who is powerless and is working according to the will of ISvara.

In advaita, Ego is defined as 'sense of individuality'. In jIva bhAva, though one is the servant of Lord, still one has ego. Finally the 'ego of servant' melts into oneness.

Very few attain sufficient purity to be ready for the teachings of second phase. Spirituality is not about intellectually knowing SAstra-s. Our mind should follow the direction of intellect. If one decides to renounce the attachment towards family members mentally, then mind should faithfully follow this instruction. In many cases this is not possible. Hence for the sake of devotees who have not attained sufficient purity and these are the majority of sAdhaka-s, describing mAyA as positive is justified. In this way, idol worship, deity worship, vedic rites and rituals, service to ISvara and singing his glories are all justified and accepted by advaitins. At right time, ISvara himself with inspire a matured devotee to practice advaita's philosophy of negation.

A matured advaita vedAntin will never make fun of deity worship and deity worshippers. Advaitins also experiences bhAva. Advaitin may experience kundalini Sakti, chakra- and higher worlds. S/he is taught to remain neutral and rise above it. In order to stay neutral and not get mesmerized by these divine phenomenon, kundalini, the world, mAyA etc is spoken negatively. Negating anything does not mean disrespect.

Q-14: Is assuming this world as illusion or unreal enough? Does it not contradict day-2-day experience?

In the process of neti-neti or as taught by bhagavAn in gItA chapter 13 that kshetra (field of observation, which is the world we live in or experience) is different from kshetraGYA (witness, observer known as sAkshI). There are various reasons why we must superimpose the unreality of this world firmly in our mind even though we experience this world and are affected by different situations we face in our life. Of-course, certain level of purity is necessary in order to be a witness. Just like water when mixed with milk becomes inseparable from milk, our consciousness is mixed i.e. strongly embedded, attached) to our mind, which in turn is strongly attached to 5 senses, which in turn rely on physical gross body. We must by any valid means separate this consciousness from mind, body and senses.

One way of doing it is to make our mind understand and agree that this world is unreal. This is not an assumption, but an affirmation. Affirmations are like auto suggestions which are used to marathon runners, psychiatrists, hypnotists and all those who work with subconscious mind. Suppose you have got fracture in hand. By repeatedly reminding or auto-suggesting your mind that 'I am healthy', 'my hand is healed', 'There is no more fracture in my hand', 'My hand is strong and healthy', 'I am completely healthy', etc. By daily repeating this instruction with calm mind, relaxed body without any thoughts in background and without having any doubt on affirmation whether they will work or not, one recovers very fast. This happens when the prime thought in your mind becomes 'My hand is healed' and there is no contradictory thought of failure to recover. There is no fear at the back of mind while repeating affirmations. Affirmations also must be accompanied with bhAva or emotions. Just before you go to sleep, get into sleepy state. Then with relaxed body and mind repeat affirmation 3-4 times and go to sleep. It so happens that they may continue throughout night in subconscious mind. When there are no stray thoughts, mind is calm, and thoughts are said with strong faith, they enter into subconscious mind. Once they enter subconscious mind, subconscious mind will make sure that whatever has entered inside it gets executed. Subconscious mind does not do rational thinking, yet it has 90 % power as compared to the conscious mind which has just 10 % power. Hence subconscious mind over powers conscious mind and executes what was feeded to it without discriminating.

When any thought is repeated or any action is repeated, it becomes habit. Similarly, Self Enquiry or neti neti or OM chanting becomes habit and goes on spontaneously. In this way, one can stay connected with Brahman even if one is engrossed in work. Chanting goes on in subconscious mind. As soon as one becomes free, mantra re-enters conscious mind and continues by itself without any effort on our part. Similarly, the process of removing wrong belief that 'this world is real' or 'I am body' or I am mind or I am jIva

(incarnated soul) can be removed by putting right belief in subconscious mind. Hence though we experience exactly opposite, we keep affirming that this world is unreal, I am not body, mind, intellect, ego or soul, I am Brahman, unchanging, immortal, unborn supreme reality.

Subconscious mind is the key to our spiritual progress. All questions like

Why and how to prayers work?
Why prayers does not work all time?

Why we get opposite to what we pray?

How can one heal oneself very fast in half of expected time?

etc, can be answered to taking subconscious mind into account

There are other practical reason for affirming that this world is unreal. Once you mentally accept that this world is unreal and temporary, you will make every effort to remain conscious, not to get pulled into it. Mind which is supposed to control 5 senses has become their slave. Senses are directed extrovert. One sees anything when light projects on retina, is projected to brain as an inverted image. However, according to shAstra-s mind travels along with senses or via senses to the object, feels it and then infers a meaningful suggestion to it. Remember that mind and brain are different. So we must make efforts to stop mind running behind senses and its hunting for worldly object. Pull it backwards and make it stable. Then make this introvert mind merge into it's source which is Brahman. Mind itself does not have any power. It is jada (gross). Like moon it reflects the power of Atman or Brahman. When mind moves towards it's source, it merges in it. Hence in order to create dispassion we must cultivate in our mind very firmly that this world is unreal. But developing just dispassion is not enough. We need to surrender ourselves to Ishvara or Brahman and pray to take us beyond mAyA. Since one disassociates oneself from sense objects, body, mind, ego and intellect by practising dispassion, surrender to Ishvara and by being witness, this path is called as 'path of negation' by it 'neti-neti' or 'Self Enquiry'. Even by chanting OM, one is technically doing neti-neti, as one is separating or dis-associating 'I' or 'Self' (kshetraGYA) from all that is non-self (kshetra). Mind focusses on OM and later on, it searches for the origin of OM and merge in it. Origin of OM, which is turiyA avasthA or peace is nothing but Brahman.

When one becomes a witness, one gets separated from the objection of observation. When one gets attracted or associates oneself with any object, one becomes fused with it, mixes with it and considers oneself to be non-different from the object. We all unknowingly accept ourselves as 'body'. Accepting unreality and temporary nature of world helps us becomes witness to it and not get attached to it. Staying as witness increases our awareness as a separate entity then object of observation. Finally one separates from mind-body-intellect-ego-soul complex and becomes aware of non-dual Brahman. But to be a witness, mind has to stop longing for sense objects. Hence establishing unreality of this world is necessary.

We understand that there is no assumption of being 'Brahman'. Just assuming does not make one 'Brahman'. One has to realise one's true nature. Hence 'I am Brahman' or 'Brahman satya, jagat mithyA' is not just assumption, but a process of 'neti-neti' or 'the path of negation'.

Q-15: Can a doer be a witness at the same time?

If one is a doer, then one cannot be a witness. A witness cannot act, as s/he is a witness. In Gita, we are taught to be the witness. Laws of karma are for those who are doers. Hence to break free from the law of karma, one has to disassociate oneself with doership by being a witness of the karma that one does. Atman is a witness and bhagavAn in gItA BG 10.20 says 'aham AtmA ghuDhAkeSa' meaning, 'Oh Arjuna I am the Atman'. bhagavAn in gItA teaches us to be a sthita praGYa. In chapter 13, Atman is called as 'kshetraGYa', the knower of kshetra and is a witness to everything.

The law of karma is only for doer and not for non-doer (witness). bhagavAn in gITa BG 3.28 says 'गुणा गुणेषु वर्तन्त … ।।3.28।।' 'guNA guNeShu vartante …' which means 'guNa-s as senses move amidst the guNa-s as the sense-objects, and the GYAnI is is not attached, as he is the knower of guNa and karma vibhAga and is separate from gunas [by being their witness].

guNa-vibhAga means the products of prakRti which consists of the three gunas.They are the five subtle elements, mind, intellect, ego, five sensory organs, five motor organs and five objects (sound etc.) of the senses.

karma-vibhAga means the varieties of inter-actions among these.

The verse means:

He who knows the truth that the Self is entirely distinct from the three Gunas and actions does not become attached to the actions. He who knows the truth about the classification of the Gunas and their respective functions understands that the alities as sense organs move amidst the alities as sense objects. Therefore he is not attached to the actions. He knows? I am Akarta -- I am not the doer. (B.G 14.23).

In brief, Atman is the witness of everything that is happening and is separate from everything. Atman is akartA, the non-doer. Atman does not do anything.

MUSINGS - OTHER SIDE OF COIN

[beta]

Namaste,

In this page, we have presented musings which represent 'other side of coin' of certain concepts which are generally taken to [obviously] mean a specific thing.

But before starting a detailed study, we will give our conclusions in brief

1. Words like param dhAma, param pada, param gati, bhagavAn, deva, ISvara, paramAtmA all point to one thing - brahman. param dhAma is param jyoti, or consciousness which is GYana
2. param dhAma is not vaikuntha, but bhagavAn himself

Lets begin our study with the analysis of anya-devatA worship, vaikunTha, parampada and param dhAma in gItA

anya-devatA worship, vaikunTha, param-pada, param-dhAma in gItA

In this article, we will cover interpretations of Anya-devata, pada and dhAma by AchArya-s of different Vaishnava sampradaya

Anya-devata Worship

Verse BG 9.25 from bhagavad gItA says,

यान्ति देवव्रता देवान् पितॄन्यान्ति पितृव्रताः।
भूतानि यान्ति भूतेज्या यान्ति मद्याजिनोऽपि माम्।।9.25।।

yānti dēvavratā dēvān pitṛnyānti pitṛvratāḥ.
bhūtāni yānti bhūtējyā yānti madyājinō.pi mām..9.25..

English translation by Swami Gambhirananda

9.25 Votaries of the gods reach the gods; the votaries of the manes go to the manes; the worshippers of the Beings reach the Beings; and those who worship Me reach Me.

OR

9.25 Worshippers of the gods (devata-s (deva-s) ascend and stay in deva-loka; the worshippers of the ancestors (staying on chandra-loka) go to the manes (chandra-loka); the worshippers of the Ghosts (bhUta, piSAca) reach their loka; and those who worship Me (Ishvara) reach Me.

Note: *Deva-loka means heaven. Chandra means moon. Loka can be taken as kingdom. Just like there is earth kingdom, there is sun-kingdom, moon-kingdom, etc.*

Sri rAmAnuja explains the meaning of the word 'vrita' mean 'will'.

The worship here refers to kAmya-karma i.e. worshipping done with some objective in mind i.e. to fulfill our desires or for peace and spiritual progress of our ancestors. There are rituals mentioned in verses which mimAmsaka-s follow. They do not consider that all actions and their fruits has to be surrendered to Ishvara. They think that veda-s give us fruits of rituals and in general veda-s give fruits of our deeds. Bhagavad Gita is the essence of Upanishads and hence it is a moksha shastra. Gita is not dharma-shastra-s which teach us religious observances, nor it is an agama, which deals with idol worship, temple construction and consecration of deities. Like the upanishads, Gita also talks about renouncing vedic rites. In this context, the verse under discussion says that instead of worshipping other Gods for personal benefits or even for universal benefit, one should worship Ishvara. It should be noted that a seeker, who has purified his mind by doing vedic rites and rituals has to drop the very karma that gave him inner purity and move ahead to Atma Jnana. Hence vedic rites and other kinds of worships are discouraged by Bhagavan fo a devotee who lives his life only and only for Ishvara and wants nothing else.

It should be noted that the verse does not contain the word 'Vaikuntha'. We have picked up this verse as this verse specifically deals with doing worship and as a merit of worship, one attains or stays in the loka of a deity worshipped. In other words, this verse talks about devata-worship and their loka-s. Kindly note that the word used by Bhagavan is not 'my loka'. Bhagavan says, those who worship me attain 'Me'. None of the acharya-s have translated the word 'me' as 'loka'. All acharya-s include Adi Shankara, four Vaishnav acharya-s, Shreedhar Svami (hid commentary is accepted by Nimbarka sampradAya) and Abhinava Gupta (Kashmir Shaivism).

It should be noted that Shiva is considered as Ishvara and not just a devata (demi-God). Hence this verse excludes Shiva / Rudra. None of the acharya-s have clarified on this verse that Ishvara (Shiva) is also anya devata in this verse. Typically, Sri Rudram is advised to

be daily chanted even by the Vaishnava-s. While studying agama-s, which deal with procedures of temple worship, one school teaches both shaiva and vaishnava agama-s. According to Kanchi Paramacharya, while learning VAilhAnasa, a Vaishnava agama (other being pAncharAtra), Brahmins conducted puja in Shiva temples are are called Shivayogins. Under the same roof (ghaTikA-s, big school teaching various subjects), vaishnava and shaiva agamas were taught (Source: Guru Tradition, Page 153).

We will find that nowhere in Gita there is a description or even the mention of the word Vaikuntha. I am not aware of Upanishads, which talk about Vaikuntha, at least not the principle upanishads.

Pada

Verses containing the word 'padam' are 2.51, 8.11, 15.4, 15.5, 18.56

In BG 8.11, achArya-s explain the meaning of the word 'pada' (पद) or 'padaM' / 'pada.m (पदं).

Note: *'pada' (पद) or 'padaM' / 'pada.m (पदं) - note the difference is anusvAra (dot) above the word pada in second spelling. This is denoted in transliteration as '.m' or 'M'*

Sri rAmAnuja explains us the meaning of 'pada' as, 'What is attained by the mind as its goal is called 'pada''

Sri mAdhvA explains us the meaning of 'pada' as, 'Since the aspirants attain that consciousness it is known as pada.m' and '

Full commentary of the verse is :

The ultimate goal to be attained is explained by Lord Krishna in this verse. Since the aspirants attain that consciousness it is known as padam or state and once that state is reached it is designated by the word 'visanti' meaning to enter. The Narada Purana states: That the ultimate goal to be attained is Lord Krishna is confirmed in the Vedic scriptures. Since that consciousness is achieved by the ascetics, it is known as padam.

Now begins the summation.

Brahmacarya or voluntary celibacy for spiritual purposes denotes attuning one's consciousness in full devotion to the Supreme Lord excluding everything else.

Source

Sri Sridhara svAmI explains akshara as praNava OM.

Lord Krishna speaks this verse with a view to instruct how the preceding practice is based on the sacred syllable OM which is the most dearest and nearest [1] transcendental sound vibration of the Supreme Lord.

Sanskrit commentary is

'केवलादभ्यासयोगादपि प्रणवाधारमभ्यासमन्तरङ्गं विधित्सुः प्रतिजानीते -- यदक्षरमिति।' . If we split the verse we get

केवल-अभ्यासयोगः-अपि प्रणव-आधार-अभ्यास-अन्तरंग विधि-अस्तु- प्रतिजानिते यदम्-अक्षरम्-इति

[1] The word antaranga can be defined as antar-anga. Antar means 'inner' and anga means 'organ'. In reference to context with BG 7.8, we can take that OM is the closest to ParamAtmA. By meaning closest, it is verily the ParamAtmA. We hear the word 'antaranga-bhakta'

We all know that OM represents nirguNa brahman. Bhagvan in Gita says 'I am OM' (BG 7.8)

The purpose of commentary is to give more clarity of the verse. Here, no acharya has mentioned pada as loka or as Vaikuntha, nor do the references made to Br. Up. mention Vaikuntha. The question is why didn't they mention the word vaikuntha, refuted advaita and shaivism.

Sri Adi Sankara mentions the pada, as 'that which is the goal, is neither gross, nor subtle', indicating that Brahman is beyond description.

Sri Abhinava Gupta mentions pada as 'the goal'

Commentaries on 15.4 and 15.5 do not describe of any pada as loka, neither it mentions Shiva as anya-devata.

English translation of madhvAchArya, as found here, contains extra words:

...the Vedic aphorism neti neti meaning it is not this, it is not that clarifies what is the unmanifest. Realising that the Supreme Lord Krishna is the seperate and distinct from all else is what makes Him clearly superior and paramount. He is the primal Supreme Lord, the only progenitor. All created beings including Brahma, Shiva, Indra and all the 300 million demigods are nothing but emantions from Him like rays of sunlight from the sun.

However, the sanskrit commentary, as available on Gita Super Site, does not say mention the word Shiva.

Sanskrit commentary by Sri MadhvAchArya

तदर्थं च तमेव प्रपद्ये प्रपद्येत। तच्चोक्तं तत्रैव "तं वै प्रपद्येत यं वै प्रपद्य न शोचति न हृष्यति न जायते न म्रियते तद्ब्रह्म मूलं तच्छित्सुः" इति।'नारायणेन दृष्टश्च प्रतिबुद्धो भवेत्पुमान्' इति च मोक्षधर्मे। छेदनोपायो ह्यत्राकाङ्क्षितः न च भगवतोऽन्यः शरण्योऽस्ति ।।15.4।।

साधनान्तरमाह -- 'निर्मानेति' ।।15.5।।

While commenting on BG 18.46, none of the acharya-s talk of vaikunTha. Sri rAmAnuja talks of 'शाश्वतं पदम् अव्ययम्' (SASvata.m padam avyayam), which could be connected with BG 15.4.

Hence we can conclude that none of the vaiSNava acharya-s say that the param pada is viShNu-loka (heavenly planet or heavenly kingdom of Lord Vishnu) which is Vaikuntha. Pada or Parampada, 'reach Me' etc has to be taken as a state of as MadhvAchArya says 'consciousness'. Atleast this can be taken as an alternate explanation or they left gap to give room for another interpretation.

Kena Upanishad says that ...Indra excelled than other Gods as he was the first **to know** that 'I am Brahman' (4.2-4.3)

BG 3.35 uses the word 'to know' (GYAna chakShu means eye of knowledge, which is nothing but knowledge itself.

BG 9.11 and 9.13 also asks us to know. BG 10.2 says that even demi-gods and great sages do not know my true nature.

Ch. Up. VII-xxv-2 also uses the word 'to know'.

Nowhere it is mentioned 'to see'.

It is interesting to note that none of the acharya-s have connected with bhAgavat pUrANa (Srimad bhAgavatam).

DeSa

Word 'desa' or 'desam' occurs in 8.21, 8.28, 15.6

Sri rAmAnuja and Sri mAdhva gives definition of dhAma as luminosity which means prakASa (prakash) and prakASa means Jnana (Knowledge)

Sri Ramanuja says: BG 8.21 Or the term 'dhama' may signify 'luminosity'. And luminosity connotes knowledge. The essential nature of the freed self is boundless knowledge, or supreme light, which stands in contrast to the shrunken knowledge of the self, when involved in Prakrti. The description given above is that of Kaivalya, the state of self-luminous existence as the pure self.

Sridhara svamI says

The six causative case by the word mama meaning my is used in the sense of identity as when one states Rahu's head which is all that remains of Rahu, it means only that. **Therefore Lord Krishna, Himself is the *paramam gatim* and no other.** This is the purport.

While commenting on the verse BG 8.28, none of the acharya-s have explained the meaning of 'desha' or 'deSa'

In BG 15.6 Sri rAmAnuja explains light (prakASa) i.e. Knowledge as

The supremacy of this light (i.e., individual self) consists in its capacity to illumine the light of knowledge. Knowledge alone can illuminate all things (including the light of the sun which sheds only physical light on objects.).

From the above explanation, what I have concluded is that the param pada, dhAma is light, which is knowledge, which is state of consciousness.

211 धाम DhAma and 212 सत्य satya

Lets understand the meaning of word dhAma as explained by Adi Sankara in viShNu sahasranAma bhAshya name #211 धाम (dhAma)

jyoti is called as dhAma. In mantravarNa i.e. nArAyaNa Up. 13.1 it is said 'nArAyaNa is parama jyoti' or by being the support or substratum ofall desires (kAmanA-s) bhagavAn is known as dhAma. shruti i.e. Br. Up. 2.3.6 says, 'is parama brahma and param dhAma'

In the next name $212 सत्य (satya), Adi Sankara says, ... shruti says, 'hence truth (satya) is called as parama' or is the truth of the truth hence is truth. Shruti i.e. Br. Up. 2.3.6 says, 'prANa is truth, [paramAtmAn] is the truth of this truth i.e. paramAtmAn is higher truth'

viShNu and caturbhuja viShNu

Updated: 21st Mar 2015

Namaste,

After reading explanation given in Musings - Other Side of Coin, it can be concluded is that the param pada, dhAma is light, which is knowledge, which is state of consciousness.

We can understand from the commentaries by Sri Adi SankarAcArya ji that he used to refer to kruShNa, nArAyaNa, viShNu, hari as brahman. Lets try to understand whether our AcArya really meant caturbhuja viShNu or is it something different.

Before starting a detailed study, we will give our conclusions in brief

1. Whenever any form of ISvara is described as 'that which is worshipped as AtmasvarUpa in heart', it is always nirguNa brahman.
2. brahman is GYanasvarUpa and is nirguNa only, but is seen by 5 senses as having guNa-s due to faulty vision.
3. viShNu is not always carutbhUja viShNu. viShNu or nArAyana when described as substratum of entire universe as the sole creator, preserver and destroyer, and as the source of all avatAra-s then the verse does not point to catur-bhUja viShNu, the deity of preservation, but brahman.
4. viShNu is sometimes taken as pradhAna prakruti meaning it is feminine form, SAkti of nirguNa brahman.
5. caturbhuja viShNu is 1/4th part of the supreme brahman, also called as viShNu.
6. viShNu or any form of ISvara is saguNa brahman and is the closest manifested form of brahman, and hence this all-powerful form 'viShNu' is worthy of worship
7. When is it said, 'I am you **and** you are me', then it confirms non-duality. e.g. if viShNu bhagavAn says that I am Siva', but Siva never says that 'I am viShNu', then one can understand that Siva is a part of viShNu, but when viShNu says, 'I am you **and** you are me', then it confirms non-duality. In the same way, at one instance, viShNu says 'I am Siva, brahmA, etc' and at a separate instance, Siva says, 'I am viShNu, brahmA, etc', then this too confirms non-duality.
8. 'I' or 'Me' in gItA can be taken as 'brahman'

Now, lets analyze how the word **'bhagavAn'** is used in purANa-s.

Meaning of the word 'bhagavAn' as given in bhAgavat purANa 3.32.31-33

bhAgavat purANa BP 3.32.31-33 talks about two ways of obtaining knowledge - the path of knowledge and the path of bhakti (devotion)

BP 3.32.31: Revered Mother! I gave you the knowledge (GYAna), a tool, that gives you the direct experience of Brahman (brahmasAxAtkara), and because of which one can know (bodha) the true nature (yathArtha svarUpa) of prakriti (mAyA) and puruSa (controller of mAyA, an omnipresent entity.

> ***Note:*** *Here it is said that one can know the true nature of both mAyA and puruSa. puruSa is sometimes taken as 'jiva' also, but in general, it is 'virATa' svarUpa. No matter whichever meaning we take, it indicates that one 'knows' both mAyA and puruSa. The knower, as witness, is always different from object of observation, hence we are not mAyA or purSa. Only in case of brahman, it is said that it cannot be reached by mind and senses, and is indescribable. Hence brahman is not to be experienced separately, but as our very own Self, there is not second, as said in mANDukya up. 7 - SAntam Sivam advaitam (brahman is peaceful, auspiciousness and non-dual)*

BP 3.32.32: O Divine mother! The fruit of both of these paths - the knowledge related to nirguNa Brahman and the knowledge of bhaktiyOga given by me is one [and same] only; Fruit of both paths i.e. final destination obtained by practising both approaches (bhakti and GYAna) are also referred by the name of 'bhagavAn'

BP 3.32.33: Just like the substratum of rUpa (form), rasa (taste), gandha (smell, aroma, fragnance), et al, many guNa-s (qualities), is one and only tatva which is experienced by different senses as different forms, in the same way, by practicing different paths as said in SAstra-s, one experiences the one and only same bhagavAn.

Earlier, sUtajI says,

BP 1.2.11: **tatvavetta-s (the knowers of truth), calls advaita-GYAna as tatva. Some call this tatva as brahma, some paramAtmA or some 'bhagavAna**'.

Brahman is both saguNa and nirguNa explains kapila munI in bhAgavat purANa 3.32.34-36

BP 3.32.34-36 without english translation of core words.

BP 3.32.34-36: Different types of karma-s [as sanctioned by SAstra-s], yaGYa, dAna, tapa, veda-adhyayan, veda-vicAra / veda-chintan [mimAmsA], Atma-indriya-nigrah {Atma is taken as mind, sanyAsa, yoga consisting of various limbs, bhaktiyoga, both types of dharmic actions like renunciation and action done with sakAma or niSkAma , knowledge of atma-tatva (Self / Brahman) and strong vairAGYa – by using all these sAdhana (tools), we can know svayamprakASa (self-effulgent) [that which lights all and which is not lighted by anyone i.e. consciousness is called as svayamprakAS] **bhagavAn who is saguNa and nirguNa.**

BP 3.32.34-36 with english translation of core words. (can be skipped)

BP 3.32.34-36: Different types of karma-s (actions) [as sanctioned by SAstra-s],

yaGYa (vedic rites and rituals),

dAna (donation)

tapa (austerity)

veda-adhyayan (to study the veda-s),

veda-vicAra / veda-chintan (thinking / comtemplating on veda-s) [mimAmsA],

Atma-indriya-nigrah (control over mind and [five] senses) - *{Atma is taken as mind}*

sanyAsa [karma-tyAga] (renunciation of actions),

yoga consisting of various limbs,

bhaktiyoga,

Both types of dharmic actions like renunciation and action done with sakAma (action done with keeping fruits on mind) or niSkAma (action done without any attachment of fruits or outcome),

knowledge of atma-tatva (Self / Brahman) and

strong vairAGYa (dispassion, absence of worldly desires in mind)

– by using all these sAdhana (tools), we can know svayamprakASa (self-effulgent) [that which lights all and which is not lighted by anyone i.e. consciousness is called as svayamprakA] bhagavAn who is of the form saguNa and nirguNa.

GYAna is param Brahma, it is one without a second and it is nirguNa says bhAgavat purANa

bhAgavat purANa says,

BP 3.32.26: **GYAnamAtra para.m brahma**

BP 3.32.28: **GYAnameka.m parAcInairindriyairbrahma nirguNa.m**

Translation of full verses:

BP 3.32.26: **It is GYAna that is pra-brahma, parameSvara / paramAtma, Isvara, puruSa**; the same bhagavAn is himself jIva, SarIra, viShaya-s, senses, etc that is manifested is different forms.

BP 3.32.28: **Gyana i.e. Brahman is one [without a second], it is nirguNa**, but still, due to extrovert senses, this brahman, due to illusion, it is experienced (Abhasa) in the form of different forms / objects (vibhinna padArtha-s) of the nature of word (Sabda), etc

i.e. the one, without the second the Brahman, which is knowledge, due to extrovert senses and due to illusion, is experienced in different forms or objects which can be known by the 5 senses via qualities like words (Sabda), etc. Here Sabda means speech. Sabda represents all 5 senses and their GYAnedriya-s like

Sabda (words) → ears
rUpa (form) → eyes

rasa (taste) → tongue

sparSa (touch) → skin and

gandha (smell) → nose

In other words, Brahman, the one without a second, though nirguNa, i.e. without guNa-s (attributes, beyond sattva, rajas and tamas), and so inconceivable is wrongly conceived with the help of mind and 5 senses and GYAnendriya-s, due to extrovert senses (extrovert mind).

viShNu purANa in anSa 5, adhyAya 18 says,

VP 5.18.57: Whose vAcaka (expression) is 'sata' pada ['OM tat, sat'], that axara (akshara) (indestructible) 'OM' is your parama svarUpa (ultimate, highest, absolute form). I bow down to your **GYAnasvarUpa** (that which is pure knowledge, pure consciousness).

(This and related verses from viShNu purANa are studied later in article 'viShNu is not always caturbhUja viShNu'

viShNu bhagavAn is the most nearest svarUpa of brahman

viShNu purANa says,

VP 1.22.61: all powerful viShNu is the para-svarUpa (higher form) of brahman and is manifested who is contemplated by yOgI-s before entering into yOga.

VP 1.22.62: O muni-s ! Whose mind is properly concentrated with continuous practice, attains 'Avalamban-yukta sabIja mahAyOga'. [1] O the fortunate one! the sarvabrahmamaya [2] [viShNu bhagavAn] is the foremost among all the parASakti and is the most nearest mUrta-brahmasvarUpa (manifested form of brahman)

[1] yOga attained by taking help of name and form i.e. manifested form of brahman.

Avalamban means support. Here it means that those who meditate properly with one-pointedness on the form of viShNu attains union. Since these yOgI-s take support of a 'form', hence their achievement is called as Avalamban-yukta. sabija could mean 'that with form' as beej is a form of manifestation. beeja also means garbha i.e. source or mAyA or lower brahman (lower brahman is explained in Gita BG 8.20).

[2] sarvabrahma-maya means 'completely identified with brahman'

Source: Gita Press, Hindi translation, page 109

viShNu is not always caturbhUja viShNu

It is a common notion to take viShNu as caturbhUja viShNu, i.e., viShNu bhagavAn having a particular form with mace, discus, lotus, Sankha, etc.

'I', 'me', param pada of viShNu, and the real nature of viShNu is nirguNa.

viShNu purANa is considered as most authentic and is most quoted purANa by Adi Sankara. When our AcArya used to write purANa, it is to be taken as 'viShNu purANa' and 'itihAsa' has to be taken as 'mahAbhArata'. (AcArya bhagavadpAda also considered vAlmiki rAmAyaNa as authentic.)

Lets study some sloka-s from viShNu purANa (VP) which cover these words.

Legends

VP: viShNu purANa

To separate viShNu, paramAtmA from chaturbhuja viShNu, [the deity of preservation] will be added in square brackets

[] square brackets are used when extra words are added to complete statement. It is not always possible to insert square brackets, we sentence construction in English is different from hindi / sanskrit.

() curved brackets are used in to define or translate sanskrit words in English, specially when the translation is not the accurace.

{} curly brackets are used to give additional explanation or alternate meaning of same word.

viShNu the supreme brahman is different from 'viShNu' of trinity. viShNu is the cause of all three. Similarly nArAyaNa is supreme brahman is different from chaturbhuja viShNu.

VP 1.2.1-2: srI parASarajI said – **the one who is the cause of brahmA, viShNu (hari) {deity of preservation} and Sankara and assumes the forms** of brahmA, viShNu {deity of preservation} and Sankara for the creation, preservation and destruction of the world (or universe). And who helps his devotees to swim the ocean of samsAra i.e. transcend his devotees beyond samsAra (this transcient world), **that changeless, pure,** indestructible, paramAtmA, always one and uniform (ekarasa), completely victorious (sarvavijayI), my salutations to bhagavAn vAsudeva viShNu.

Simple translation of VP1.2.3:

VP 1.2.3: Inspite of being one, appears as in many forms, is of the nature of gross-subtle, is unmanifested and is also manifest, and is the cause of liberation of his devotees, I bow to that bhagavAn viShNu.

VP 1.2.3 directly translated from hindi version of Gita Press:

VP 1.2.3: Inspite of being one, still is [seen] in different forms {appears in different forms}, is of the nature of gross-subtle, is unmanifested {the cause - kAraNa}, and is manifest {effect – kArya} (vyaktarUpa), and is the cause of liberation (mukti) [of his devotees who worship him with continuous devotion / or with feeling 'I am not different from brahman'] [I bow to that bhagavAn viShNu]

VP 1.2.4: The one who is the root cause of the creation, preservation and destruction of this world, I bow to that viShNu paramAtmA.

From the above verses, it is clear that there are two viShNu-s.

- *One who is the root cause of the trinity and takes their form*
- *One who is the deity of preservation.*

The verses also point the

- *viShNu is both manifest as effect and unmanifest as the cause.*
- *viShNu is paramAtmA*

> *Verses also point that thou viShNu appears in different forms, viShNu is still the changeless and pure. Here pure is to be taken as free from guNa-s. In gItA it is said that one must 'know' bhagavAn' and this can be done by using 'asanga SAstra'. a-sanga means not to associate with any guNa.*

Later verses 5-8 describe bhagavAn viShNu is nirmal GYAnasvarUpa i.e. of the nature of pure consciousness, but due to ignorance is seen as various forms.

VP 1.2.5-8: **That which is the substratum of the whole universe, is subtle than the subtlest, is the puruSottama established in all beings and is indestructible, that paramArtha (highest truth) [in reality] is nirmala [1] GYAnasvarUpa [2], but due to ignorance, is recognized as vaious forms**, and that [in the form of kAla (time)} is the creator, preserver and destroyer of the world, to that jagadiSvara (lord of the world), ajanmA (unborn), axaya (akshaya) (indestructible) and avayaya (unchanging), [who is] bhagavAn viShNu, I bow and will tell you the whole event gradually (in order), that truth which was told by bhagavAn brahmA jI when he was requested by daxa (daksha), etc munI-s.

[1] nirmala - stainless, that which is not impure by mixing of guNa-s
[2] GYAna-svarUpa - that which is of the form of pure knowledge / consciousness. Here the word 'form' is not to be taken literally. sva-rUpa means 'one's own [real] form. GYAna-sva-rUpa means that whose form is GYAna [itself] i.e. that which is Self-effulgent and can be known by itself only.

Verses 10-13 describes viShNu, the paramAtmA as free from all guNa-s and six types of changes or modifications like birth, etc, is beyond names and forms, and for the one we can only say that 'it is' [or it exists] (in hindi - 'hai'). *Due to being eternal (nitya), without any birth, undecaying, imperishable, the one and due to the absence of guNa-s[viShNu bhagavAn] is called as pure parabrahma.*

VP 1.2.10-13: 'That which is para (higher) than the para [prakriti], parashreSTha (best of the best), **paramAtmA abiding in AtmA {heart}, that in which form, colour, name and attributes are negated (absent) (vivarjIta);** in which birth (conception), existence, growth, transformation (change, modification), decay (xaya, kshaya) and destruction - all these six changes are absent; **which can only be said to 'exist' (i.e. is existence), and for which it is popularly said 'it is present everywhere' and in him the whole universe resides - hence wise call it [this tatva as] vAsudeva' that [same tatva] is eternal, unborn, undecaying (imperishable), unchanging,**

unchangeable (ekarasa) and is devoid of guNa-s like 'can be renounced' (heya) etc, due to these reason is called as 'nirmala parabrahma' [1]

[1] nirmala = pure, mala = impurity, nir-mala = in which there is no impurity, i.e. devoid of any impurity

paramAtmA is beyond guNa-s and attributes, it cannot be negated and is called as nirmala parabrahman (pure consciousness)

Verse 15 describes puruSa as the first from of parabrahma.

VP 1.2.15: **O dvija ! (twice born), puruSa is the first form of paramAtmAn**, unmanifested [prakruti] and manifested [mahada, etc] are his other forms. And since [this form] is adorned by all, kAla (time) is the topmost / best form (paramarUpa).

Four forms of paramAtmAn are

1. puruSa
2. avyakta (prakriti)
3. vyakta (mahada, etc)
4. kAla

Verse 1.2.15 shows that puruSa itself is not the supreme para-brahman, but the first form or manifestation of viShNu. Here puruSa can be an omnipresent entity and not caturbhUja viShNu, a person.

Some more verses from viShNu purANa will make thing clear

We will take verses 1.22.26-27 into consideration. Earlier verse 2.22.23 says that janArdana, during creation, preservation and destruction divides itself into four parts. Later verses describe four parts assumed during creation, preservation and destruction of the world.

VP 1.22.23: [That] janArdana divides itself into four parts while creating and preserving the universe and by dividing itself in four forms destroys the world.

Now, the four parts are described w.r.t. guNa-s. First it starts with creation (rajas), then sattva (preservation) and lastly tamas guNa (destruction)

VP 1.22.24-25: With one part becomes **unmanifested brahmA ji**, with second part marici, etc prajApati, [lord's] third part is kAla and fourth is all beings.

VP 1.22.26-27 Then that puruShottama with support (getting in tune with) sattva guNa preserves the world. **During that time, from first part [1], viShNu [deity of preservation] form preserves the world**, with second part, assumes the form of manu,

etc and **from third assumes the form of kAla (time)** and from forth is present in all bhUta-s (all bodies, i.e. is present everywhere).

Here the classification is different than earlier verses. This is because this classification is based on guNa-s

[1] The literal meaning is - from first part becomes viShNu and preserves the universe.

the word unmanifested brahmA ji indicates that brahmA ji was present even during first creation of universe and later on stayed in unmanifested form. This is also confirmed in kurma purANa.

VP 1.22.28-29: and in the end [when time for destruction of universe has come], that unborn bhagavAn taking AdhAra (support) of tamo guNa (tamas guna), with one part takes rudrarUpa, with second [part] agni (fire) and form of death, with third kAla and with fourth stays in all bodies and worlds (omnipresence)

Studying verse VP 1.22.26-27, we can come to following conclusion:

- puruShottama is different from viShNu, the deity of preservation.
- viShNu as deity of preservation, is only a part of puruShottama
- viShNu, as deity of preservation, does not have quality of assuming forms of manu, etc, kAla and omnipresence (ability to be present in all beings)
- Assuming the form of kAla, means that puruShottama can stay nirAkAra (formless).
- viShNu takes form with the help of three guNa-s. Hence what we see is actually viShNu (tatva) covered with guNA-s.

An interesting thing is that, the names viShNu, nArAyanA, hari, puruShottama, janArdana, etc are interchangeably used with chaturbhUja viShNu, a person. This creates a lot of confusion. But from our study, we can conclude that whenever any form is glorified as the supreme, creator, preserver and deity of destruction and also present in all living beings, is mahA-kAla and assumes the form of manu, etc then it is not chaturbhuja viShNu, it is the supreme brahman, nirguNa brahman.

Some more verses supporting the claim that viShNu is different from chaturbhuja viShNu.

VP 1.2.61 Established [in Self], the vishveshvara bhagavAn viShNu, by endowing itself [as brahman is nirguNa adn nirAkAra] with rajoguNa, assumed the form of brahmA jI began the work of creation

VP 1.2.62 And after finishing the creation, **by endowing itself with the most magnificient sattvaguNA, the great bhagavAn viShNu [as viShNu, the preserver] sustains the creation for many yuga-s yuga-yugAntara) until the end of kalpa**

VP 1.2.63 O Maitrei (maitrai)! then, in the end of kalpa, by endowing itself with the painful tamoguNa, assumed the form of rudra that janArdana viShNu [different from preserver viShNu], destroys or engulfs everything.

VP 1.2.66 The same (one and only one) bhagavAn janArdana, assumes the form (upAdhi-s, sanGYA) of brahmA for creation, viShNu for preservation and Siva for destruction.

VP 1.2.67 [That] bhagavAn viShNu, by becoming [or acting or assuming the form of] creator [brahmA jI] creation itself, by assuming the form of viShNu sustains itself and by assuming the form of Siva destroys itself and itself [which is creation and jIva-s] merges into itself.

There are more verses which confirm that viShNu is not always caturbhUja viShNu

VP 1.22.30: O brahman ! for [the purpose of] destruction [of these worlds], four types of everlasting (sarvakAlika)[1] divisions are imagined of that mahAtmA (vibhAga-kalpanA)

sarvakAlika also means, occurrence at all times, present at all times.

Hence here we can take sarvakAlika as the divisions that occur each time there is destruction of the world.

VP 1.22.31: **brahmA**, daxa (daksha) etc prajApatigaNa, kAla **and all living beings** - **all these are parts (vibhuti-s) of Sri hari** **are the cause of the creation of the world.**

VP 1.22.32: he dvija ! (twice born), **viShNu**, manu, etc, kAla **and all beings** - all these **are the cause of sustenance of the worlds** and **are the parts (vibhuti-s) of bhagavAn viShNu**

VP 1.22.33: and **rudra**, kAla, death, etc **and all jIva-s (beings)** - all these **four parts (vibhuti-s) are of SrI janArdana** and **are the cause of destruction (pralaya) [of the worlds].**

These verses indicate that

- brahmA, viShNu [deity of preservation] and rudra are parts (vibhuti-s) of the supreme lord, viShNu.
- brahmA, viShNu [deity of preservation] and rudra are not jIva-s as kAla i.e. time is not a person and the word 'all jIva-s' is separated by the word 'and' (ca - in sanskrit). If you take 'and' as just the addition of last word, then all three brahmA, viShNu and rudra become jiva-s, which is unwise to accept.
- **VP 1.22.33 indicates that rudra is not a jiva**, but a form or partial manifestation of the supreme brahman, commonly referred by the name 'viShNu'

We shall understand some more verses:

For understanding that the substratum of universe and all activities is nirguNa brahman, lets have a look at verse 1.22.41 and 1.22.42

VP 1.22.41: For the creation, preservation and in the end time [i.e. at the time of destruction] of this world, he, associates with three guNa-s, and hence his parampada is [the] great nirguNa.

Note: The word nirguNa is not used in sanskrit. It is logically derived meaning. It will be more clear when we take next few verses into consideration.

VP 1.22.42: This form (svarUpa) of paramAtmA is GYAnamaya (of the form of knowledge), vyApaka (all pervading, spread everywhere), svasamvedya (self-known, self effulgent, samvedya means to be known) and anupama (incomparable, to be taken as beyond comparison) and that form too is of four types.

(later verses describe this four types)

VP 1.22.43: (Sri maitreya jI said) - O muni ! Please explain me how the param pada, as desrcibed by you is of four types? Please explin this step-by-step (vidhi-pUrvaka)

VP 1.22.44: (Sri parASara jI said) - O Maitreya ! That which is the cause (kAraNa) of all is also the tool / effect **(sAdhana)** and the achievement (siddhi) of the wished / imagined (abhimata) object is subject **(sAdhya)**

Lets study these four types of knowledge

VP 1.22.45: For those yogi-s who wish for liberation (mukti), prANayam etc is sAdhana (tool / subject) and parabrahman is sAdhya (object), from where one does not have to return [back to this world]

VP 1.22.46: he muni! the one which is the reason (cause) of liberation of a yogI, that 'sAdhanAlamban-GYana' [1] (knowledge obtained through prANayama) is the first difference of brahma-bhUta parampada (the supreme Brahman)

[1] prAnAyama etc are called as sAdhana-Avalamban GYAna (as given in Gita Press, Gorakhpur, Sanskrit-Hindi edition)

VP 1.22.47: To free oneself from kleSa-bandhan (bondage of sorrow), the practitioner of yoga, the yogi's 'sAdhya-rUpa' (object of worship), which is brahma, O great saint, this knowledge is called as 'Alambana-viGYAna' [1] and is the second difference.

[1] Alamban-viGYAna is taking help of knowledge. with word viGYAna can also mean direct experience.

***Note:** The first different is sAdhana and second is sAdhya. sAdhana is subject or tool and sAdhya is object or destination or final goal. This is similar to 'tvam pada' and 'tat pada' in the mahAvAkya 'tat tvam asi'*

VP 1.22.48: The third difference is 'advaitamaya-GYAna' (non-dual knowledge), which is the realization of non-difference between the two - 'sAdya-sAdhana'

In simple words, a yogi, established in non-dual knowledge, realizes the non-difference between the the subject and object of worship.

VP 1.22.49-51 and O great yogi!, by realizing the quality of these three types of knowledge [mentioned earlier], **a yogi, after negating [1] these three types of knowledge, experiences the GYAnasvarUpa viShNu's** (viShNu as knowledge, pure consciousness), which is similar to the similar to (i.e. same as) the Self, as **nirvyApAra** (inactive or action-less), anirvicanIya (indescribable), vyAptimAtra (omnipresence), anupama (incomparable), Atmabodha-svarUpa (of the nature of knowledge of Self), **sattAmAtra** (as mere entity or existence), **alaXaNa** (without any characteristics, without any expression, or form), **Santa** (peaceful), abhaya (in which there is no fear), Suddha (pure) [2], **bhAvAtIta** (beyond expression, sentiment, emotion, manifestation), and is Ashrayahina-rUpa (is of the nature of 'without any support, i.e. is Self Supporting, not dependent upon anything else), **this supreme state known by the name 'brahma' (brahman)**, is the fourth difference.

[1] word used is nirAkaraNa

[2] pure means without any mixing, means asanga, without association (with anything)

All the laxaNa-s point to nirguNa brahman. Hence in VP 1.22.41, we have added the word 'nirguNa' for the sanskrit word 'mahAn'.

Lets brief the four types of GYAna (knowledges) as described in VP 1.22.46-51

1. 'sAdhana-Alamban-GYana' (knowledge obtained through prANayam) --> **sAdhana** (subject)
2. 'Alambana-viGYAna' (knowledge / information of object of worship i.e. brahma) --> **sAdya** (object of worship)
3. 'advaitamaya-GYAna' (non-dual knowledge), which is the realization of **non-difference between the two - 'sAdya-sAdhana'**

4. brahma-saxAtkAra - negation of above three different types of knowledge and realizing the Self as nirguNa brahman, where there is no second.

It is difficult to explain these differences. Lets try to understand them.

- First type of knowledge is the mastery over breath (prANa) i.e. mastery over breathing techniques. This may also include activation of kundalini
- Second type of knowledge is the understanding of brahman via study or by words of guru.

- Third type of knowledge is understanding that there is non-difference meditator (subject, sAdhana) and object (sAdhya) i.e. jIva is not different from brahman. In other words, 'I' of jIva is not different from real 'I' - brahman. Earlier we had also seen that the cause and effect are non-different (VP 1.22.44). Even if we take this state as experience, still there is a thin line of separation and a trace of Ego left which says, 'I am brahman. There is no difference between us'. There is someone experiencing 'unity' or 'oneness'.
- The fourth type of knowledge is the knowledge of the supreme Brahman, in which there is no separate experience.

We can further simplify the four types of knowledge as

- Preparation (i.e. getting qualified for knowledge of brahman)
- Spiritual instruction (updeSa) about knowledge of brahman
- Knowledge that object of meditation and subject i.e. jIva (tvam pada) and brahman (tat) pada are not different.(here there is someone who says that 'I am one'. To negate any trace of duality in unity, the fourth type of knowledge is defined.
- Realization of non-dual brahman as Self.

The fourth type of knowledge is different. It is direct experience of brahman as 'Self' or 'I'. Lets understand this fourth type of knowledge.

During meditation, there is a duality of observer and object of observer. When the object drops, then observer, which is relative term, also cease to exist, as there is nothing left to observe. What remains is just 'you' or 'I'. This 'I' is completely different from 'I' of Ego. Hence earlier it is said that in relation to ISvara, it is said that ISvara 'exists', nothing more can be said.

The fourth type of GYAna is the best. One rises beyond dvaita-advaita. One may have a doubt that even when one realizes non-difference, one is experiencing something.To break this jynx, the fourth type of GYana in which there is no [separate] experience is mentioned. Hence it is also said in VP 1.2.10-13 that we can only say that ISvara 'exists' (VP 1.2.10-13). Here too in VP 1.22.49-51, the word used is 'sattA-mAtra' which means, 'existence' or 'consciousness'

After knowing the non-difference between subject (meditator) and object (brahman), the separateness melts. What remains is only 'I' also called as 'consciousness'.

Lets continue our study in which we try to understand that viShNu is not always caturbhuja viShNu, a person.

viShNu purANa in anSa 5, adhyAya 18 relates viShNu with yaGYa (vedic rites and rituals)

VP: 5.18.49: O inconveivable ISvara ! I bow to parameSvara who is everything (sarvarUpa) [1] and of the form of oblations offered in havan (havis) You are inconveivable via intellect (beyond intellect, that which cannot be meditated by using 5 senses, mind and intellect) and are beyond prakruti, I repeatedly bow down to you.

[1] Adi Shankara while giving explaining the word सर्व (sarva - 25) in viShNu sahasaranAma

says that the says of the cause or substratum of creation, preservation and destruction of both सत् sat (truth) and असत् asat (unreal) is called as sarva.

sarvarUpa also means who has taken all forms.

VP 5.18.51: O xara-axaramaya ISvara (kshara-akshara ISvara) (that which is of the form of both perishable and non-perishable i.e. of form and formless), [please] be pleased. **It is you only who is imagined (kalpite) and is described (glorified) by [the names and forms] - brahmA, viShNu and Siva.**

VP 5.18.52: he nAtha! (O lord!), where there is always abhAva (non-existence, negation) of names and forms, which are nothing but imagination, that is you - nitya (eternal), avikArI (unchangeable, immutable), and ajanmA (unborn) para-brahma.

VP 5.18.52: **Since without imagination, no element (padArtha) can be known, hence you are glorified [and worshipped] by the names kruShNa, acyuta, ananta and viShNu etc names. [In reality you cannot be referred by any name.]**

VP 5.18.57: Whose vAcaka (expression) is 'sata' pada ['OM tat, sat'], that axara (akshara) (indestructible) 'OM' is your parama svarUpa (ultimate, highest, absolute form). I bow down to your GYAnasvarUpa (that which is pure knowledge, pure consciousness).

VP 5.18.58: He prabho! (O Lord), I repeatedly bow down to your forms (svarUpa) - vAsudeva, sankarShaNa, pradyumna and aniruddha.

From above verses, we can understand that everything that we see both perishable and imperishable is nothing but ISvara. Any form of ISvara is nothing but imagination. Since one cannot meditate on (know) that which cannot be imagined and is beyond intellect, hence names and forms of formless brahman are imagined. OM preprestns para-brahma and expresses 'sat' pada, the absolute truth, which is GYAnasvarUpa.

We can also conclude, that brahman is conventionally referred as viShNu or vAsudeva or by any other names and forms of ISvara, as it is easy to contemplate on names and forms.

viShNu and caturbhuja viShNu in mahAbhArata

It is said that what is found in mahAbhArata may not be found anywhere else, but what is not found in mahAbhArata is not found anywhere else. English Translation of Kisari Mohan Ganguli, which praised by all is available. However, the sanskrit verses in sacredtexts.com are not accurate. Also not all verses are typed in Sanskrit. Hence we have adapted Gita Press's version with Sanskrit-Hindi Translation uploaded by vedpuran.net. The English translation of sanskrit verses is compared with Hindi Translation of Gita Press and an edited translation is presented.

In Adi Parva, section 1, chapter 1, verses 22-25 sings the glory of unborn supreme reality, viShNu [not the deity of preservation].

Adi parva, section 1, chapter 1, verses 29-37 give the account of creation. These verses describe birth of brahmA, rudra [not turiya Siva], viShNu [deity of preservation], who took avatars to protect the universe and reestablish dharma.

M.Bh. 1.1.22-25 (Adi parva, section 1, chapter 1, verses 22 to 25)

महाभारत, आदि पर्व ।

नारायणं नमस्कृत्य नरं चैव नरोत्तमम ।
देवीं सरस्वतीं चैव ततो जयम उदीरयेत ।।

Om! Having bowed down to Narayana and Nara, the most exalted male being, and also to the goddess Saraswati, must the word 'Jaya' be uttered.

सौतिरुवाच
आद्यं पुरुषमीशानं पुरुहतं परुष्टुतम् ।
ऋतमेकाक्षरं **ब्रह्म** व्यक्ताव्यक्तं सनातनम् ।। २२ ।।

असच्च सदसच्चैव यद् विश्वं सदसप्तरम् ।
परावराणां स्त्रष्टारं पुराणं परमव्ययम् ।। २३ ।।

मङ्गल्यं मङ्गलं विष्णुं वरेण्यमनघं शुचिम् ।
नमस्कृत्य हृषीकेशं चराचरगुरुं **हरिम्** ।। २४ ।।

महर्षेः पूजितस्तेय सर्वलोकैर्महात्मनः ।
प्रवक्ष्यामि मतं पुण्यं व्यासस्याद्भुतकर्मण ।। २५ ।।

Sauti then said, 'Having bowed down to the **primordial being ISAna [1],** to whom multitudes make offerings, and who is adored by the multitude; who is the true incorruptible one, **Brahman [1]**, perceptible, imperceptible, eternal; who is both a non-existing and an existing-non-existing being; who is the universe and also distinct from the existing and non-existing universe; who is the creator of high and low; the ancient, exalted, inexhaustible one; **who is viShNu, auspiscious and the auspiciousness itself [2]**, worthy of all preference, pure and immaculate; **who is hari [3],** the ruler of the faculties, the guide of all things movable and immovable; ...

निष्प्रभे ऽस्मिन् निरालोके **सर्वतस्तमसावृते** ।
बृहदण्डमभूदेकं प्रजानां बीजमव्ययम् ।। २९ ।।

युगस्यादौ निमितं तन्महद्दिव्यं प्रचक्षते ।
यस्मिन् संश्रूयते **सत्यंज्योतिर्ब्रह्म सनातनम्** ।। ३० ।।

अद्भुतं चाप्यचिन्त्यं च सर्वत्र समतां गतम् ।

अव्यक्तं कारणं सूक्ष्मं यत्तत् सदसदात्मकम् ।। ३१ ।।

यस्मात् पितामहो जज्ञे प्रभुरेकः प्रजापतिः ।
ब्रह्मा सुरुगुरुः स्थाणुर्मनुः कः परमेष्ठ्यथ ।। ३२ ।।

प्राचेतसस्तथा दक्षो दक्षपुत्राश्च सप्त वै ।
ततः प्रजानां परतः प्राभन्नेकविंशतिः ।। ३३ ।।

पुरुषश्चाप्रमेयात्मा (पुरुषश च अप्रमेय-आत्मा) यं सर्व ऋषयो विदुः ।
विश्वेदेवास्तथादित्या वसवोऽश्थाश्विनावपि ।। ३४ ।।

In this world, when it was destitute of brightness and light, and **enveloped all around in total darkness (tamas) [when there was no name and form] [4]**, there came into being [or then manifested], as the primal cause of creation, a mighty egg, the one inexhaustible seed of all created beings. It is called Mahadivya, and was formed at the beginning of the Yuga, in which we are told, **was the true light Brahman (satya-svarUpa brahmajyoti) , the eternal one [5]**, the wonderful and inconceivable being present alike in all places; the invisible and subtile cause, whose nature partaketh of entity and non-entity (sat-asata) everything is this brahman only. From this egg came out the lord Pitamaha brahmA, the one only prajApatI; with Suraguru and Sthanu. Then appeared the twenty-one Prajapatis, viz., Manu, Vasishtha and Parameshthi; ten Prachetas, Daksha, and the seven sons of Daksha. **Then appeared the man of inconceivable nature / Atman (aprameya-AtmA) [puruSa, viShNu] whom all the Rishis know [6]** and so the Viswe-devas, the Adityas, the Vasus, and the twin Aswins; the Yakshas, the Sadhyas, the Pisachas, the Guhyakas, and the Pitrus.

[1] **primordial being Isana, Brahman**

Indicates that First there was ISAna, the primordial Being. ISAna (ईशान) is the name of rudra / Siva. Even in the mahAbhArata, Lord Siva is not born during the creation, but it is the primordial being, neither male (he), not female (she), but tatvam (it), which is nothing but pure consciousness. ISAna is Brahman of the upanishads.

[2] **who is viShNu, auspiscious and the auspisciousness itself**

*viShNu here means all -pervading as the word viShNu is rooted in the word 'viSh' 'विष्'. Siva means 'in which all things lie'. Siva also means 'auspiciousness' i.e. mangalmaya or mangalaM '**मङ्गलं**'.*

[3] **who is hari**

'hari, which is a popular name of bhagavAn viShNu has many meanings. hari is the name of 'brahmA'. It also means 'of Siva', 'sun', 'captivating', name of 'Indra'. In viShNu saharanAma stotra bhASya, Adi SankarAcArya jI has explained the meaning of hari (name #650) as 'because of removing or withdrawing, samsAra, this world along with it's cause [which is avidyA, ignorance] is called as 'hari'. 'hara', the name of Siva also means 'to remove or withdraw', withdraw what? the cause of suffering, which is ignorance. Siva, in rudra form also destroys samsAra, and pulls it back into himself. In this way, hari-hara-aikya (non-difference between hari and hara i.e. viShNu and Siva) is established. This hari and hara are not person, but supreme brahman itself. They are just praised in the form of person for our convenience and also because they are both the nearest form of manifested brahman (mUrta-brahma-svarUpa). This is already discussed in earlier article, 'viShNu is the nearest form of manifested Brahman'

From [1], [2], and [3], it is can understood that both viShNu and Siva are same as brahman.

[4] **enveloped all around in total darkness (tamas) [when there was no name and form]**

This refers to nAsadiya sukta of rig veda which says that from darkness [tamas], everything is born. nAsadiya sukta is explained in another article. Here it means that there was no form or shape and the first shape that appeared was an 'egg'.

[5] **was the true light Brahman (satya-svarUpa brahmajyoti) , the eternal one**

This was the manifestation of Brahman and so is spread in all that is created, be it moving or non-moving.

[6] **Then appeared the man of inconceivable nature / Atman (aprameya-AtmA) [puruSa, viShNu] whom all the Rishis know**

aprameya AtmA (name #248) is another adjective, or name used for viShNu bhagavAn. It means 'immeasurable Atman'. He is the first puruSa whom is worthy of worship and whom the rishi-s knew.

From the above analysis, we can conclude that

1. rudra / Siva was not born from brahmA jI during the creation of the world.

2. hari and ISAna / Siva are same as brahman and are not a person, but supreme brahman

3. hari is different from puruSa viShNu who took avatAra-s to protect the world and re-establish dharma.

4. hari / viShNu is different from caturbhuja viShNu, the deity of preservation.

Atma bodha upanishad describes caturbhuja viShNu

Atma Bodh Upanishad is quoted by Adi Sankara in viShNu sahanranAma bhASya. Hence it is interesting to study this upanishad. First verse of Atma bodha (Atma Bodh) upanishad describes that by meditating on OM one gets liberation and by meditating on nArAyANa holding Sankha, cakra (chakra) and gadA and chanting the mantra 'Om namo nArAyaNAya' ascends to vaikunTha.

Adi Sankara quotes verse 4 and half verse 5 from adhyAya 1. To understand those verses, lets study the upanishad from beginning.

AB. Up. 1.1: The one who is of the nature of Ananda, the inner most, of the nature of brahman, having three mAtrA-s 'a'-kAra, 'u'-kAra and 'm'-kAra is praNava OM. By chanting this mantra, yogI-s attain liberation. **By meditating on nArAyANa holding Sankha, cakra (chakra) and gadA and chanting the mantra 'Om namo nArAyaNAya' ascends to vaikunTha.**

The verse is split into two

(1) The one who is of the nature of Ananda, the inner most, of the nature of brahman, having three mAtrA-s 'a'-kAra, 'u'-kAra and 'm'-kAra is praNava OM. By chanting this mantra, yogI-s attain liberation.

(2) By meditating on nArAyANa holding Sankha, cakra (chakra) and gadA and chanting the mantra 'Om namo nArAyaNAya' ascends to vaikunTha.

nArAyaNa mentioned here is specified as having a particular form. Hence this nArAyaNa is different from brahman. Hence the verse says that the one who chants OM is liberated, while the one who chants 'Om namo nArAyanAya', the mantra of nArAyaNa as personal deity, goes to vaikunTha. It is not mentioned that the devotee is liberated.

AB. Up. 1.2: The hridayarUpI kamal (heart-lotus) is brahmapUra. {pura means city}. this [tatva] alone shines like a deepak (lamp) without any external light. i.e. it shines by itself.

AB. Up. 1.3: Son of devaki [bhagavAn kruShNa] is the well-wisher of brAhmaNa-s (brahmins), [that] madhusUdana is always the well-wisher of brAhmaNa-s, lotus-eyed bhagavAn viShNu is always well wisher of brAhmaNa-s and this indestructible [bhagavAn viShNu], is beloved of brAhmANa-s who are always steadfast in his devotion.

brAhmANa-s could here mean religious, pious, knowers of brahman, meditating on brahman.

AB. Up. 1.4 nArAyaNa is the one, existing in all creatures, the causal and comsic (virATa) person (puruSa), the one without a cause, nArAyaNa is causeless, is parabrahma and is praNava-rUpa omkAra (OM).

Here, nArAyaNa is not a person, but the cause of all. In verse 1.1 we have seen that chanting OM leads one to liberation. OM is nirAkAra, hence when any form of ISvara is compared or equated with OM, then it is nirAkAra, nirguNa brahman and not a person. Practically it is observed that no one meditates on any form of ISvara like nArAyaNa or Siva with chanting OM. Each form is it's own mantra.

AB. Up. 1.5: [In this way the] by meditating on viShNu [as parabrahman, by chanting OM], one gets free from sorrow / misery (Soka) and attachment (moha) and never suffers any sorrow (dukha). dvaita becomes advaita, becomes free from the fear of death.. Anyone who sees difference in brahman, repeatedly attains death.

dvaita here means the one having dvaita-buddhi i.e. one believing in difference. Similarly advaita means the one who believes in non-difference. By saying that dvaita becomes advaita, it means that the 'I' ness that divides consciousness and experiences duality, now experiences non-duality.

Later verses describe that the one chanting OM gets fruits of all actions (as GYAna is the best fruit. All actions finally lead to same para-brahman. Hence by knowing this brahman, one's all wishes are fulfilled). He becomes jivan mukti and after the prArabhdha is completed, one attains videh-mutki.

The trend observed in most upanishads is creation, of the universe form one and only one brahman. Then non-dual nirguNa brahman is described, mostly by theory of negation. Later verses extol brahman by a name say viShNu or Siva. The reason for extolling a form of viShNu is because of it is difficult to contemplate on formless, attributeless brahman. Hence the form closest to or nearest to brahman which is either viShNu or Siva is praised. This form is also connected with brahman and is glorified as brahman itself, as that form is direct manifestion of brahman. One needs a name and form to visualize nad meditate upon, else beginners cannot meditate on that which is invisible. Mind needs something to hold on to, hence initially support of a personal deity is taken. Later, after maturity, (and depending upon prakriti), one is shifted to nirguNa upAsanA i.e. nidhidhyAsan or meditation on OM or neti-neti or practice Self Enquiry.

yoga vAsisTha in arjunopAkhyAna explains who should meditate on viShNu as AtmasvarUpa and caturbhuja viShNu

yoga vAsiSTha is one of the best advaitic text and widely quoted one by SrI vidyAraNya svAmI in his pancadaSI. In the sixth part, there are 267 verses which are called as arjunopAkhyAna. These are sarga-s 55 to 58 of nirvANa prakaraNa - I (There are two

nirvANa prakaraNa-s in yoga vAsiSTha which is said to have 32000 verses. Only 28000 are available today). This version of bhagavad gItA is the anticipated version to be spoken by kruShNa in dvApAra yuga.

SrI rAma asks questions as to what will viShNu give upadeSa in future (dvApAra yuga). guru vAsiSTha, being a trikALadarSI (knower of past, present and future all at a time) describes in brief the updeSa given by nArAyaNa (kruShNa) to nara (arjuna) both are the parts of bhagavAn viShNu. This version is also called as vAsiSTha's version of bhagavad gItA. This is an essence of vedAnta and a treat to read. It gives us a lot of clarity.

Scholars say that rAmAyaNa consists of two parts - kathA-upAya (the story part) and moksha-upAya (method for spiritual Liberation). According to yoga vAsiSTha, Both these two constitutes the entire rAmAyaNa. kathA-upAya is traditional rAmAyaNa and moksha-upAya is yoga vAsiSTha.

Many commentaries are written on yoga vAsiSTha, but the famous one is by Sri Ananda bodhendra sarasvatI (ABS), which closely follows advaita. ABS Comment is given after verse inside sq. brackets.

In chapter 2, sarga 53, titled 'The homily (religious discourse) to Arjuna' verses 35-40 discuss about two forms of bhagavAn kruShNa (Krishna)

Arjuna said:

35. O Lord of Gods, you have two forms; (the transcendental) beyond and the immanent lower (in this world). What (is) the form, of what nature, and when should I resort to and abide in it for fulfilment (siddhi)?

[Comment: Following the instruction concerning the two natures (of God) in verses 34, Arjuna now asks how to know the qualification (adhikAra) and the appropriate time for (worshipping either of the two natures).]

The Lord said:

36. O sinless One, know My two forms; the common one and the transcendental. The common form is endowed with hands and so forth, holding conch, discus and mace.

[Comment: 'Common' means easily understandable for ordinary people]

37. That which is my transcendental form has no beginning and end; it is one, without corruption, and it is expressed by words such as Brahman, 'Self', 'Supreme Self'

[Comment: The Supreme Form, difficult to attain by those of impure mind.]

38. Until you are fully awakened and remain without the knowledge of Self, be intent upon the worship of the god with the fhour-armed form.

39. When in due order you become enlightened, you will know that nature beyond; the form of Me that has no beginning and no end, and by (knowing which) one is not born again.

[Comment: 'In due order' means with the gradual purification of mind']

40. If, however, your being has known (the aspect of mine) that is worthy of knowledge, O destroyer of enemies, then resort immediately to my Self, the Self of (your) self.

[Comment: I have told you of devotion to the qualitative (saguna) nature, considering the possibility of a lack of purity of (your) mind. If, however, your being (bhAva), that is, mind, is so pure (as to be one with) Brahman, whose nature is totality of cognition (vijnAna-eka-svabhAva), and who is worthy of being known, you should resort to the indivisible and completely perfect Self. (This you may do) by coalescing My Self, (who am) God and your Self Self; (My Self) in it's transcendental nature determining its objects, and your self in its objective nature determining its essence. This coalescence is between investigating the meaning of the word tat (that), which is Myself, and investigating the meaning of the word tvam (thou), which is yourself. Then resort to the indivisible completely Full Self. Awakening to this, then, be firmly established in it. 'Resort to', that is, becoming enlightened: be resolute upon it.]

viShNu is sometimes feminine aspect of brahman

viShNu purANa explains paramapada as,

1.9.55: That **deva** of which brahmA, viShNu [deity of preservation] and Siva**rUpa** are indescribable powers (abhUtapUrva Sakti), **that same deva is** [bhagavAna] viShNu's parampada

From this verse, we can conclude that

1. viShNu, when explained as paramapada, paramdhAma, parama-gati, brahman, creator, preserver and destroyer of three worlds, etc, this viShNu is different from the viShNu, who is a person, and has responsibility of preservation of the worlds.

2. brahmA, viShNu and Siva are forms of viShNu, who is brahman

3. brahmA, viShNu and Siva are called as Sakti (powers), hence they can be taken as feminine aspects under some circumstances. When they are mentioned as masculine, their feminine aspects are usually their consorts, who are their powers as described in viShNu purANa in the anSa 1, adhyAya 8

4. Here the word 'deva' is used.

Adi Sankara explains the word deva in bhASya on viShNu sahasranAma (in padaceda 13, just before sahasranAma begins explains), deva is mahAtmA, and is AtmA.

viShNu saharanAma Sankara bhASya explaining the word 'deva' in simple words, (you can skip this section to avoid complication)

The most famous mantra of all the names that are created by the guNa-s, and is known by mantra-draShTA rishi-s, and that which is sung in all divine stories of bhagavAn. For the benefit of those who wish to work on four purushastha-s and gain siddhi on all four puruSartha-s, I am going to tell you the name of that great deva (mahAtmA) who cannot be contemplated by mind, (iti linga purANe 1.70.16)

Translation given by Gita press (hindi version)

Those names of lower-related i.e. of guNa-s meaning that which arises due to guNa-s, out of that which is most famous, and is known by mantra and by mantra-draShTA muni-s (mantra seeing rishi-s [1]), meaning that which is sung in all bhagavat-kathA-s (glorious stories explaining the divine life and liilA of bhagavAna), that mahAtmA - all the names of acintyaprabhAva deva (that deva which cannot be contemplated), those who are willing to walk on 4 puruSArtha-s - for the siddhi of four puruSArtha-s I am describing you

That which is mahAn AtmA is called as mahAtmA. Since this puruSa (jIva) attains [brahmabhAva in suShupti], [in dream sleep], experiences objects [without indriya-s [3]], and [in waking state] enjoys this objects [of senses] and hence is always [4] in present state (tense), hence is known as 'AtmA' By this statement, this 'deva' is 'mahAtmA'

[1] seeing symbolically represents all 5 senses. It can also mean to intuitively realize as flash in heart.
[2] beyond realms of mind and hence contemplation

[3] puruSa in dream sleep cognizes via mind and not 5 senses

[4] nirantara - without break, or nira-antar - no distance, hence no separation --> indicates non-duality or un-divided. nira-antar means no distance, very close.

Source: Page 50, viShNu sahasranAmaSankara bhASya, Gita Press

Similarly, if we read somewhere that rudra derives strength from viShNu, then we can conclude that here, viShNu is a feminine aspect, the Sakti or power of Siva or rudra. rudra here is brahman, the para-Siva or para-bhairav of Saiva-s. brahman cannot do anything without it's power, hence it is said that rudra derives his strength from viShNu, the all pervading power of rudra, which indeed is rudra's very own Sakti. In this case, viShNu is not brahman, is not caturbhuja i.e. a personal deity, but is Sakti of rudra.

In rudra-hridaya Upanishad, viShNu is said to be umA

The upanishad says: Now, at this moment, I take refuge in that Pure State of the Supreme Absolute which can be known by the Vidya, called the Rudra Hridaya Upanishad.

After prostrating before the celebrated form of Sri Mahadeva-Rudra in his heart, adoring the sacred Bhasma and Rudraksha and mentally reciting the great Mahavakya-Mantra, Tarasara, Sri Suka asked his father Sri Vyasa Maharshi, thus:

Who is the real God of gods? In whom are all these existences established? By worshipping whom, can I please the Devas in whole?

Hearing these words, Sri Veda Vyasa replied thus:

Rudra is the embodiment of all Devas. All devas are merely different manifestations of Sri Rudra Himself. On the right side of Rudra, there is the sun, then the four-headed Brahma, and then three Agnis (fires). On the left side, there exist Sri Umadevi, and also Vishnu and Soma (moon). **Uma Herself is the form of Vishnu.** Vishnu Himself is the form of the moon. Therefore, **those who worship Lord Vishnu, worship Siva Himself. And those who worship Siva, worship Lord Vishnu in reality. Those who envy and hate Sri Rudra, are actually hating Sri Vishnu. Those who decry Lord Siva, decry Vishnu Himself. Rudra is the generator of the seed. Vishnu is the embryo of the seed.** Siva Himself is Brahma and Brahma Himself is Agni. **Rudra is full of Brahma and Vishnu.** The whole world is full of Agni and Soma. The masculine gender is Lord Siva. The feminine gender is Sri Bhavani Devi. All the mobile and immobile creation of this universe, is filled up with Uma and Rudra. **The Vyakta is Sri Uma, and the Avyakta is Lord Siva. The combination of Uma and Sankara is Vishnu.** Hence everybody should prostrate to Sri Maha Vishnu with great devotion. He is the Atman. He is the Paramatman. He is the Antaratman. Brahma is the Antaratman. Siva is the Paramatman. Vishnu is the Eternal Atman of all this universe. This whole creation of Svarga, Martya and Patala Lokas is a big tree. Vishnu is the top portion (branches) of this tree. Brahma is the stem. The root is Lord Siva. The effect is Vishnu. The action is Brahma. The cause is Siva. For the benefit of the worlds. Rudra has taken these three forms.

There are two Vidyas to be known. They are Para and Apara. Apara Vidya is the embodiment of the four Vedas and their six Angas. They do not deal with the Nature of the Atman. But the **Para Vidya is called the Moksha-Sastra. It deals with that supreme philosophy of the Absolute Truth, ununderstandable, impersonal, Nirguna, Nirakara, without ears, without eyes, without hands, without feet, eternal, omnipresent, imperishable, and knowable by the intelligent daring sages.**

Sri Rudram from yajurveda says:

"Namo bhavaya cha rudraya cha

namah sharvaya cha pashupataye cha

namo girishaya cha shipivishhtaya cha |" (Anuvaka 5)

"Salutations to Him who is the source of all things. And to Him who is the destroyer of all ills. Salutations to the destroyer and to the protector of all beings in bondage. Salutations to Him who dwells on the mount and **who is in the form of Shipivista (Vishnu)**".

From the above verses, we can conclude that

There is no difference between rudra, umA and viShNu

- umA is viShNu
- viShNu is combination of both umA and Sankara - this viShNu means omnipresent entity, the indweller of all beings.

puruSa is not always a person

It is a common notion that puruSa means a person though in macro cosmic form (virATa svarUpa).

mudgal Upanishad is cited by rAmAnuja. It describes the real form of puruSa, specifically nArAyaNa or viShNu.

I. A SUMMARY OF PURUSHASUKTA

We shall explain the Purusha-sukta: In 'a thousand-headed' thousand means countless; the word 'ten fingers', means infinite distance, by the first stanza Vishnu's pervasion in space is stated, by the second the pervasion in time; the third speaks of his giving liberation. The glory of Vishnu is given in 'Etavan' (so much is his greatness). The same stanza states his four-fold nature. 'Tripad' etc., speaks of the glory of Aniruddha. **In 'from that Virat was born' has been shown the origin of Prakriti and Purusha from a quarter of Hari.** By 'Yat Purushena' the sacrifice of creation is stated as well as Moksha. In 'Tasmad' world creations are stated. 'Vedaham' speaks of Hari's glory. By 'Yajnena' is stated the end of creation and liberation. One who knows it becomes liberated.

II. THE SUPREME MYSTERY

In Mudgalopanishad the greatness of Purusha-sukta has been stated in detail. Vasudeva instructed the knowledge of Bhagavan to Indra; again imparted to the humble Indra the great mystery with two sections of the Purusha-sukta. These two are: The Purusha described above gave up the object which was beyond the scope of name and form, hard for worldly people to understand and took a form with a thousand parts and capable of giving Moksha on sight, for uplifting the suffering Devas and others. In that form, pervading the world he was beyond it by an infinite distance. This Narayana was the Past, Present and the Future. And was the giver of Moksha to all. He is greater than the greatest – none is greater than He.

He made himself into four parts and with three of them exists in the heaven. **By the fourth, the Aniruddha (for of) Narayana, all worlds have come to be. This (part of) Narayana created Prakriti (Matter) for making the worlds (Prakriti stands for the four-faced Brahma).** In full form the latter did not know the work of creation – this Aniruddha-Narayana told him.

Taking into account verses in bhagaVat purANa and viShNu purANa, we can can understand that puruSa is not the person or caturbhuja viShNu, a person, but formless-attributeless (nirAkAra-nirguNa) brahman.

The above verses also make us understand that only a part of brahman is manifested. vidyAraNya svAmI says that mAyA is eka-deSiya, as this world is created only from the part of Sri hari.

If we take viShNu as person, then it will be difficult to explain verses which say bhagavAn has infinite eyes, and the verses which says, it sees without eyes, it hears without ears. Only formless can be interpreted in this way, as it sees through the eyes of all and hears through ears of all, as this brahman is all-pervading and is also situated in our heart.

bhagavAn as 'AtmasvarUpa' and GYAnasvarUpa is non-other than nirAkAra brahma

Whenever it is said that one has to know bhagavAn as 'AtmasvarUpa'. As earlier said, bhagavAn is GYanasvarUpa.

Some statements like

BP 1.2.20: Realisation of 'AtmasvarUpa bhagavAn' in heart destroys all types of heart-knots, doubts and bondages due to karma-s

point to us that bhagavAn is established in our heart as AtmasvarUpa. Again, the word Atma means 'I'. Hence bhagavAn is the Self, the real 'I'. This tatva, though denoted by the word 'bhagavAn' is nothing but my own Self, Brahman, is non-dual and is nirguNa and nirAkAra.

tArAsAra upanishad *Chapter 1 explains 'OM Namo Narayanaya' as tAraka mantra. nArAyaNa is not a personal deity but OM itslef and is chidAtmA, seated in heart as GYAnasvarUpa. This is confirmed in chapter 2*

Chapter – 1

2.Then Bharadvaja asked Yajnavalkya: "What is Taraka ? What is that which causes one to cross (this mundane existence)". **To which Yajnavalkya replied: "OM namo nArAyaNAya" is the Taraka. It should be worshipped as Chidatma.**

Now the mantra OM namo nArAyaNAya is explained

Om is a single syllable and of the nature of Atman. Namah is of two syllables and is of the nature of Prakriti (matter). Narayanaya is of five syllables and is of the nature of Parabrahman. He who knows this becomes immortal.

Through 'Om', is Brahma produced;

through 'Na' is Vishnu produced;

through 'Ma' is Rudra produced;

through 'Na' is Ishvara produced;

through 'Ra' is the Anda-Virat (or Virat of the universe) produced;

through 'Ya' is Purusha produced;

through 'Na' is Bhagavan (Lord) produced; and

through 'Ya' is Paramatman produced.

This Ashtakshara (eight syllables) of Narayana is the supreme and the highest Purusha. Thus is the Rig-Veda with the first foot (or half).

(Chapter 2 explains OM as tAraka mantra)

CHAPTER – II

That which is Om is the indestructible, the supreme and Brahman. That alone should be worshipped. It is this that is of the eight subtle syllables. And this becomes eight, being of eight forms.

'A' is the first letter;

'U' is the second;
'M' is the third;
Bindu is the fourth;
Nada is the fifth;
Kala is the sixth;
Kalatita (that beyond Kala) is the seventh;
and that which is beyond these is the eighth.

It is called Taraka, because it enables one to cross this mundane existence. Know that Taraka alone is Brahman and it alone should be worshipped".

Adi Sankara in viShNu sahasranAma bhASya says one should worship viShNu as Atmarupa

In VS BhAshya, while explaining the words 1 and 2, there is a long commentary.

In page 64 of Gita Press, Sanskrit - Hindi Translation, Adi Sankara confirms one has to worship viShNu as chidAtmA / AtmarUpa quoting mahAbhArata karmakANDa

Sanskrit:

आत्मानं विष्णुं ध्यात्वार्चन - स्तुतिनमस्कारादि कर्तव्यम् ।
'नाविष्णुः कीर्तयेद् विष्णुं नाविष्णुर्विष्णुमर्चयेत् ।
नाविष्णुः संस्मरेद् विष्णुं नाविष्णुर्विष्णुमाप्नुयात् ॥

In Hindi it is translated as

' बिना विष्णुरुप हुए विष्णुका कीर्तन न करे, बिना विष्णु हुए विष्णुका पूजन न करे, बिना विष्णु हुए विष्णुका स्मरण न करे और न बिना विष्णु हुए विष्णुको प्राप्त हो । '

This pujA (worship), stuti (praise) and namaskArAdi (offering respect / reverence / salutation or worship) is to be meditated upon (chintan) viShNu [bhagavAn] as AtmarUpa. In mahAbhArata karma kANDa, it is said - without being / becoming viShNu do not do kirtan (sing holy glories) of viShNu, without beingbecoming viShNu do not perform pUjA (worship) viShNu, without becoming viShNu one does not attain viShNu'

Note: Becoming means to have a bhAva that 'I ma not different from viShNu' it is an attitude of feeling non-difference from viShNu [tatva] which is noting but Atmatatva.

Later Adi Sankara quotes that

In viShNu dharmottara it is said that –

'O faultless, all these names are of parabrahma only' 'whichever object a bhakta wishes, s/he will, no doubt, attain it. By worshipping (ArAdhanA) of jagadguru, all desires are fulfilled.

Adi Sankara now maps this parabrahma with govinda, indicating that by indicating the name govinda, it is not a personal deity, but in reality the parabrahman.

Humans can attain govinda by being absorbed or being identical (tanmaya) with him, that

who becomes absorbed or becomes identified [with govinda] obtains all objects desired by him/her, there is no doubt in it.

We may think that this indicates that the person govinda / viShNu is the brahman, however, it is not the case, as it is the parabrahman who is talked about. govinda is the representative of this brahman, as we have seen in the article 'viShNu and caturbhuja viShNu'. This means that govinda also gets his powers from viShNu, who is supreme brahman. We have seen that from 1/4th part, viShNu [the supreme brahman] creates viShNu [deity of preservation]. This deity of preservation does not sound all powerful, as it is not capable of becoming other 3 parts, namely the kAla (time) as for doing any thing, time is necessary, without time, there cannot be any action. there can be no creation, preservation and destruction, if there is no time. Hence in all three actions, Brahman has kAla as one part. It is also said in viShNu purANa that kAla is the most favourite form of brahman.

Adi Sankara later maps Krishna of bhagavad gita and then guru as brahman.

This means that viShNu, krishna, guru are one and the same as brahman.

Siva as supreme brahman says bhAgavat purANa

Earlier we have seen that none of the trinity is jIva. bhAgavat purANa also glorifies Siva as supreme brahman. During samudra-manthan, a deadly poison emerged from the churning. In order to save the universe and all devatA-s and asura-s, brahmA ji along with devatA-s approached bhagavAn Siva. In following verses, Siva is glorified

BP 8.7.21: O deva of devatatA-s mahAdeva! you are the AtmA of all beings and are the life saver of all. We all have come to your refuge. Please save us from this deadly poison which otherwise destroy the whole universe.

BP 8.7.22: Only you are capable of liberating and giving bondage of the world(s). Hence wise persons worship only you, as you are the remover of sorrows of those who have taken refuge in you and are jagadguru (world teacher)

BP 8.7.24: **O prabhu! (O lord) with the help of your own illusive power which consists of three guNa-s, you creation, preserve and destroy this world; though you are one, you manifest (appear) as brahmA, viShNu and Siva.**

BP 8.7.25: You are self effulgent, the reason for this [being self effulgent] is that you are the deeply mysterious brahma-tatva. You are the life giver of all devatA-s, humans, animals, birds, etc whatever is real or unreal, living / moving or non-moving. There is no creation which is not you (i.e. Siva is present in all living and non-living and Siva is everything. Nothing exists that is not Siva); because, you are everybody's AtmA. By various types of energies (Sakti-s) you are manifested as this world; because you are ISvara and are all-powerful.

Verse BP 8.7.29 defines Siva as a state of consciousness

BP 8.7.29: sadyojAta etc five vedic mantras are represented by your five faces [1], from which 38 celebrated vedic mantra-s are created. **When you arise beyond guNa-s and are established in your Self, then this state is called as 'Siva' (Siva-Akhyam). In reality, it is the same Self Effulgent paramArtha-tatva (supreme consciousness).**

[1] Five vedic mantra-s are (1) *puruSa,* (2) *aghora,* (3) *sadyojAta,* (4) *vAmadeva,* and (5) *ISAna*

Lets understand something more about Lord Siva and his five forms.

The five faces or forms of Shiva represent the five functions or acts (panchakrityas) – creation, sustenance, dissolution, concealing grace and revealing grace, respectively. The five forms or faces of Shiva also correspond to the five syllables in the holy pentasyllabic mantra – *na-mah-shi-vā-ya*.

We will try to correlate five faces or forms of Siva with different analogies. These five faces can be associated with 5 great elements (pancamahAbhuta-s) or five bodies (koSa-s)

sadyojAta is associated with the western direction and represents *Icchā Shaktī*--will power. Sadyojāta is associated with Manomaya Kosha—the sheath covering the soul that consists of mind. Additionally, this face is associated with the fire element representing the fire of the mind and the fire of the body. This face is Shiva's function as the creative force and is associated with Manipura chakra.

VAmadeva is associated with the northern direction. This face of Shiva is associated with the shakti of strength and beauty as well as the goddess Maya. Vāmadeva is associated with the Vijñānamaya Kosha. This face is the *Citta rūpa,* the form of the universal consciousness limited to the individual mind. Several traditions believe that mantra to Vāmadeva has considerable healing benefit. This is the preserving energy of Shiva, and is connected with the air element as well as the Ānahata Chakra.

aghora is associated with the southern direction and jñāna Shaktī--the power of knowledge; as well as the *Buddhi rūpa* meaning the form of the intellect. This face is associated with the Pranamaya Kosha, and represents the rejuvenating and dissolving qualities of Shiva as well as being connected with the water element and Svadishthana chakra.

tatpuruSa is the eastern face. This face represents the parātman or supreme soul behind the physical being. This form is Ānānda Shaktī, the power of bliss. Connected with the Annamaya kosha, tatpurusha in its higher manifestation is bliss; in the lower manifestation it is the concealing power of Shiva. This face is associated with the earth element, muladhara chakra and is considered beneficial for increasing focus.

ISAna is the upper or skyward face. It is the *Citta Shaktī* or power of the individual consciousness to realize the universal consciousness. This form is associated with Akasha or ether, and the Vishuddha chakra. This is the total energy of Shiva encompassing all attributes of Shiva. This is the face of Shiva that is the revealing power and is associated with the Anandamaya kosha.

Source

Following is the summary form of panca-brahma upanishad, which represents five forms of sadASiva collectively called as 'panca-brahma', as they are forms of eternal brahman. ***panca-brahman (Panch Brhama) upanishad explains the meaning of the word tatpuruSa, which is found in many variants of gAyatrI mantra***

Sathyojatha is the aspect of earth and is the Sun, Goddess Lakshmi, Brahma, the letter Om, Rig Veda, Garhapathyagni (Household fire), mantras, Saptha Swaras (seven notes) and yellow colour. It gives all that is wished for.

Aghora is the aspect of water and is moon, Goddess ParvatI, Yajur Veda, blue colour of the cloud, Dakshinagni (the fire of the south) and fifty letters (basic sanskrit alphabets). It drives away all sins, destroys all that is evil and grants riches.

Vamadeva gives great knowledge and destroys all sins. It is the aspect of fire, is lights of crores of suns, Sama Veda, eight type of songs, courageous tone, Ahwaneeyagni, power of knowledge, power to destroy and slightly blackish white colour. It gives full consciousness, rules over all the three worlds, spread over all the three worlds and grants all sort of luck and results for the action performed.

Tatpurusha is with eight letters (Aa, Ka, Cha, Ta, Tha, Pa, Ya, Sa) and is in the eight petal lotus and is normally surrounded by air. It has five fires, protects effects of mantras, personification of the fifty consonants, has the form of Atharva Veda, is the chief of several crores of Ganas, has the shape which is extremely big, red coloured, gives whatever is asked for, medicine for worry and diseases and the root of Srishti (creation), Sthithi (upkeep) and Laya(merging). It is the basis of all strengths. **It is the turiyA which is beyond the three common states and is the thing called Brahman. It is worshipped by brahmA and viShNu etc. It is the philosophy from which all others originate**.

You should understand that **Ishana** is the witness for intelligence and is the activator of the brain. **It is the aspect of sky and cannot be seen. It is decorated by the sound of "Om". It has the shape of all devas. It is peaceful. It is beyond peace. It is beyond sound.** It is Aa and occupies the headship of vowels. **It is the form of Pancha Brahma which is everywhere and activates the five actions of creation, upkeep, destruction, disappearance and blessing.** It hides the Pancha Brahmas within itself and exists as itself and shines beyond the Pancha Brahmas by its light. It shines in the beginning, middle and end without any causative reason. **All those devas who are all under stupor by the illusion of Sambhu would not understand properly that Mahadeva who is the teacher of the universe, is the cause of all causes.** His shape does not appear before the eye. This world is shining because of that Parathpara Purusha in whom the world exists. It merges in him. That Ishana aspect is the Para Brahman which is the upper boundary of peace. The knowledge that the Para Brhaman is oneself and the rise of Sathyo Jatam (birth of truth) is Para Brahman. Whichever is seen or heard is the soul of Para Brahman.

The upanishad later on says that

The existence in five shapes is called Brahma Karya (activity). After understanding Brahma

Karya, Ishana is appreciated. **After putting the fact all that is originating from Para Brahman in ones soul, the wise man experiences and understands that "It is me" and becomes Brahman as well as deathless.** There is no doubt that the one who understands this Brahman becomes freed (emancipated).

Upanishad also explains there is no second one, i.e. nothing exists that is not Siva. It says, if any thing or activity is seen as not different from the cause (Siva), then it is always truth, but if seen as different, then it is wrong or illusion (mruShA).

The verse ends with

The cause of universe consisting of moving and non-moving or living and non-living is pure consciousness and is advaita only. (P.B. Up. 38-39)

Last two verses of panca-brahma-upanishad says:

P.B. Up. 40-41): In the body, which depends upon indestructible brahman, there is a dahara (heart), which is the resting place of brahman, also known as punDarika i.e. kamala (lotus), [brahman] is established in this heart-space. Whose who wish to get liberated (moxa, moksha) should search sat-cit-Anand Siva in this heart-space. Siva is always seated in heart and is a witness of all [activities]. In this way heart is called as Siva-svarUpa, this heart is called as the emancipator i.e. that which liberates from samsAra.

From above verses we conclude that:

1. Siva is brahman.
2. Five forms of sadASiva are his own manifestations and are not literally born
3. Siva, as brahman is worshipped by brahmA ji and viShNu ji [deity of preservation] - we have to take viShNu as deity of perservation as brahman can only be one.
4. Siva is always established in heart

A description of Panchabrahma is given in the ajita Agama (20, 158-164a) in the form of instructions to temple priests:

"After thus constructing mentally the throne of Siva, holding a handful of flowers, with steady mind and controlled senses, one should meditate on Siva's body sitting in the lotus posture, shining with the color of pure crystal, endowed with five heads, serene, with smiling faces, having the brilliance of ten million suns, of new full-blown youth, with ten arms, brightened by a crest of tawny tresses rolled upwards, each face having three radiant eyes, or shaktis, with the crescent moon of wisdom in His hair, the cause of all causes, His right hands holding the no-fear posture, a trident, an axe, a sword and a thunderbolt, His left hands holding a noose, a serpent, an elephant goad, fire and a bell, all fit for a supreme sovereign, endowed with every auspicious mark, adorned with ample ornaments, in radiant raiments, attractive, having beautiful garlands and an ointment of sandalwood paste."

In his commentary on Mrigendra Agama, Aghorasivacharya (12th century) is careful to point out that while we speak of Siva with five faces and many limbs, He does not actually

possess these features. This visualization in only for the sake of meditation and adoration.

Apart from this, there is also an interesting interpretaion of natarAja form of Siva in connection with five faces or five actions

Siva naTarAja form and five actions

Siva Nataraja, Lord of Dance, a well-known murti (worshipful icon), clearly depicts these five actions.

1. **Creation, or emanation (srishti), is represented by His upper right hand** holding the drum upon which He beats Paranada, the Primal Sound, from which issue forth the rhythms and cycles of creation.
2. **Preservation (sthiti) is represented by His lower right hand**, held in the gesture of blessing, abhaya mudra, indicating "fear not."
3. **Destruction (samhara), dissolution or absorption, is symbolized by the fire in His upper left hand**, held in ardha-chandra mudra, "half-moon gesture."
4. **Obscuring grace (tirodhana)**, the power which hides the truth from souls, thereby permitting experience, growth and eventual fulfillment of destiny, **is represented by His right foot upon the prostrate person**, apasmarapurusha, who symbolizes the principle of ignorance, or anava.
5. **Revealing grace (anugraha)**, **which grants knowledge and severs the soul's bonds, is symbolized by Siva's raised left foot,** and by His lower left hand, held in gajahasta or "elephant trunk" mudra, inviting approach.

Source *(The website gives good information about Siva linga and Saiva-siddhanta paddhati)*

Conclusion

From bhAgavat purANa, viShNu purANa and from the analysis of commentaries on bhagavat gItA by various revered AcArya-s, we can conclude that viShNu is not always caturbhUja viShNu, we also come to know that the real nature of bhagavAn, paramAtmA, para-brahman, etc all is GYAnasvarUpa. GYana has ability or nature to give knowledge. knowing bhagavAn [and other similar words] one can transcend three guNa-s. It is due to GYAna or consciousness that one can become aware of anything and can gain knowledge. Hence brahman is GYAna-svarUpa.

Whenever brahman is described as to be meditated as 'AtmasvarUpa' or 'GYAnasaRupa' residing in our heart, it points to nirguNa brahman i.e. laxyArtha is always nirguNa brahman.

Since jIva is formless and genderless, and there is no difference jIva and brahman, hence brahman also cannot have any form. Even if we take that jIva is qualitatively same but quantititatively different, still, the same principle applies.

We have also known that viShNu is the nearest form of manifested brahman or saguNa brahman, hence yOgI-s meditate on him. viShNu is also at times taken as power of brahman and hence viShNu in this context is a feminine form (Sakti). viShNu is not always caturbhUja viShNu and puruSa is not always a person.

In this context, lets understand that whenever bhagavAn kruShNa used the words 'I' or 'Me' it does not necessarily mean the our beloved mAdhava, murlidhara kruShNa. When taken in proper context, it could mean 'ISvara' or 'Brahman'.

'I' or 'Me' in Gita can be taken as 'Brahman'

[beta]

Taking above analysis further, we can study some verses from bhagavad gItA which point to kruShNa talking from Atma-bhAva. This does not mean kruShNa is inferior to brahman. It simply means that kruShNa is not always to be taken as person.

In this context, lets study **Sankara bhASya on BG 9.34**

मन्मना भव मद्भक्तो मद्याजी मां नमस्कुरु।
मामेवैष्यसि युक्त्वैवमात्मानं मत्परायणः।।9.34।।

manmanā bhava madbhaktō madyājī māṅ namaskuru.
māmēvaiṣyasi yuktvaivamātmānaṅ matparāyaṇaḥ..9.34
Word-to-word Translation:

9.34 मन्मनाः with mind filled with Me, भव be thou, मद्भक्तः My devotee, मद्याजी sacrificing unto Me, माम् unto Me, नमस्कुरु bow down, माम् to Me, एव alone, एष्यसि thou shalt come, युक्त्वा having united, एवम् thus, आत्मानम् the self, मत्परायणः taking Me as the Supreme Goal.

9.34 Having your mind fixed on Me, be devoted to Me, sacrifice to Me, and bow down to Me. By concentrating your mind and accepting Me as the supreme Goal, you shall surely attain Me who am thus the Self.

OR

9.34 Fix thy mind on Me; by devoted to Me; sacrifice unto Me; bow down to Me; having thus united thy whole self to Me, taking Me as the supreme goal, thou shalt come unto Me.

Note: Here Adi SankarAcArya explains the meaning of certain important words. Hence lets put the verse again with important verses explained by Sankara bhagavapAda in **bold green** . Here the word युक्त्वैवमात्मानं yuktvaivamātmānaṅ is split into yuktvA-evam-AtmanAm. Here Adi Sankara connects two words mA.m and AtmAna.m

मन्मना भव **मद्भक्तो मद्याजी मां** नमस्कुरु।
मामेवैष्यसि **युक्त्वैवमात्मानं** मत्परायणः।।9.34।।

manmanā bhava **madbhaktō madyājī māṅ** namaskuru.
māmēvaiṣyasi yuktvaivam**ātmānaṅ** matparāyaṇaḥ..9.34

Shankara Bhasya in brief

9.34 **Manmana -**, have your mind fixed on **Me**; **madbhakah** - devoted to **Me**. **Madyaji** - One who worships me and bows down to **Me**; In this way, by fixing your mind in **Me (yuktvA)**, by surrendering **me** and accepting **me** as the final goal, you will gain **me**, the parameSvara. Opinion is that **I am the AtmA** of all bhUta-s (all bodies) and paramgati, param sthAna (final destination), who am thus the **Self (AtmasvarUpa)** that you shall attain. In this way, the former word **'mAma'** i.e. **Me** is connected to the later word **'AtmAna.m'** **'Self'**.

In simple words, the word, 'Me' (mAm) is to be taken as AtmasrvarUpa or Brahman or AtmA and not our beloved prankster, murlidhar, bansidhar kruShNa, the person. From the analysis of the words 'bhagavAn', 'paramAtmA', etc, we can now know that Adi SAnkara said what purANa-s say. Real nature is GYAnasvarUpa and not a person.

Full sanskrit commentary and translation are provided for those who wish to study the full verse. This can be skipped. Please skip upto 'Summary'.

Sanskrit commentary by Sri Sankaracharya

-- मयि वासुदेवे मनः यस्य स त्वं मन्मनाः भव तथा मद्भक्तः भव मद्याजी मद्यजनशीलः भव। माम् एव च नमस्कुरु। माम् एव ईश्वरम् एष्यसि आगमिष्यसि युक्त्वा समाधाय चित्तम्। एवम् आत्मानम्, अहं हि सर्वेषां भूतानाम् आत्मा, परा च गतिः, परम् अयनम्, तं माम् एवंभूतम्, एष्यसि इति अतीतेन संबन्धः, मत्परायणः सन् इत्यर्थः।।इति श्रीमत्परमहंसपरिव्राजकाचार्यस्य श्रीगोवन्दभगवत्पूज्यपादशिष्यस्य श्रीमच्छंकरभगवतः कृतौ श्रीमद्भगवद्गीताभाष्येनवमोऽध्यायः।। ।।9.34।।

Hindi translation by Sri Harikrishandas Goenka (on Sri Sankaracharya's Sanskrit Commentary)

किस प्रकार (भजन-सेवा करें सो कहा जाता है --) तू मन्मना -- मुझमें ही मनवाला हो। मद्भक्त -- मेरा ही

भक्त हो। मद्याजी -- मेरा ही पूजन करनेवाला हो और मुझे ही नमस्कार किया कर। इस प्रकार चित्तको मुझमें लगाकर मेरे परायण -- शरण हुआ तू मुझ परमेश्वरको ही प्राप्त हो जायगा। अभिप्राय यह कि मैं ही सब भूतोंका आत्मा और परमगति -- **परम स्थान हूँ, ऐसा जो मैं आत्मरूप हूँ उसीको तू प्राप्त हो जायगा। इस प्रकार पहलेके 'माम्' शब्दसे 'आत्मानम्' शब्दका सम्बन्ध है ।।9.34।।**

Simplified English Translation

9.34 have your mind fixed on Me ('vasudeva') and also be devoted to Me. sacrifice to Me, be engaged in sacrificing to Me. And bow down only to Me. by concentrating your mind and by accepting Me as the supreme Goal you shall surely attain Me who am God. **You shall attain Me who am thus the Self. I indeed am the Self of all the beings, and am also the supreme Goal. You shall attain Me who am such. In this way, the word 'aatmaanaam' (Self) is to be connected with the preceding word 'maam' (Me). This is the purport.**

English translation by Swami Gambhirananda (on Sri Sankaracharya's Sanskrit Commentary) *–can be Skipped*

9.34 Manmana bhava, have your mind fixed on Me; Here Ast. adds the word vasudeva.-Tr and also be madbhakah, devoted to Me. Madyaji, sacrifice to Me, be engaged in sacrificing to Me. And namaskuru, bow down; only mam, to Me. Yuktva, by concentrating your mind; and mat-parayanah, by accepting Me as the supreme Goal; esyasi eva, you shall surely attain; mam, Me who am God. You shall attain Me evam atmanam, who am thus the Self: I indeed am the Self of all the beings, and am also the supreme Goal. You shall attain Me who am such. In this way, the word atmanam (Self) is to be connected with the preceding word mam (Me). This is the purport.

Summary:

Bhagavan, who is the Self of all beings, has to be meditated upon with steadfast devotion. Bhakta will attain 'me'.

There are more examples in Gita in which we understand that kruShNa is talking as Brahman and not as a person..

Bhagavan in Gita 18.66 says,

सर्वधर्मान्परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं व्रज।

अहं त्वा सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुचः।।18.66।।

18.66 Abandoning all duties, take refuge in Me alone: I will liberate thee from all sins; grieve not.

Here, the word 'व्रज'। can be translated as 'go', but most people translate it as 'come'

So the translation will be:

18:66, Leaving all dharma (varNa, Ashrama and ordinary dharma), go to my refuge only and I will make you free from all sins and grant you moksha.

Slokas (verses) in which Krishna talks about himself and vasudeva

वृष्णीनां वासुदेवोऽस्मि पाण्डवानां धनंजयः।
मुनीनामप्यहं व्यासः कवीनामुशना कविः।।10.37।।

vṛṣṇīnāṅ vāsudēvō.smi pāṇḍavānāṅ dhanaṅjayaḥ.
munīnāmapyahaṅ vyāsaḥ kavīnāmuśanā kaviḥ..10.37..

10.37 **Of the vrsnis (The clan to which Sri krishna belonged, known otherwise as the Yadavas). I am Vasudeva**; of the Pandavas, Dhananjaya (Arjuna). And of the wise, I am Vyasa; of the omniscient, the omniscient Usanas, the poet, the seer of past present and future (Sukracharya, Guru of asuras).

Note: Usanas is translated by both Swami Sivananda (of divine life society) and Adi Shankaracharya in their commentaries as Sukracharya. Meaning of 'Vrsnis' is taken from translation by Swami Ghambhirananda (of Advaita Ashram). KavinAma and the words 'seer of past, present and future' are taken from Adi Shankaracharya's commentary.

Here, kruShNa has used both words 'I' and 'vAsudeva'. Hence it is clear that Krishna, supreme brahman is different from vAsudeva. Though both are one, yet they are different.

Hence taking 'I' or 'Me' said by bhagavan as 'Atma-bhava' will not be wrong.

बहूनां जन्मनामन्ते ज्ञानवान्मां प्रपद्यते।
वासुदेवः सर्वमिति स महात्मा सुदुर्लभः।।7.19।।

bahūnāṅ janmanāmantē jñānavānmāṅ prapadyatē.
vāsudēvaḥ sarvamiti sa mahātmā sudurlabhaḥ..7.19..

7.19 At the end of many births the wise man comes to Me, realising that all this is Vasudeva (the innermost Self); such a great soul (Mahatma) is very hard to find.

Adi Shankaracharya's commentary will make it more clear

Sanskrit commentary:

-- बहूनां जन्मनां ज्ञानार्थसंस्काराश्रयाणाम् अन्ते समाप्तौ ज्ञानवान् प्राप्तपरिपाकज्ञानः मां वासुदेवं प्रत्यगात्मानं प्रत्यक्षतः प्रपद्यते। कथम्? वासुदेवः सर्वम् इति। यः एवं सर्वात्मानं मां नारायणं प्रतिपद्यते, सः महात्मा; न तत्समः अन्यः अस्ति, अधिको वा। अतः सुदुर्लभः, 'मनुष्याणां सहस्रेषु' इति हि उक्तम्।।आत्मैव सर्वो वासुदेव इत्येवमप्रतिपत्तौ कारणमुच्यते -- ।।7.19।।

Simplified English Translation:

7.19 **At the end, after the completion of many births, which become the repository for accumulating the tendencies leading to Knowledge, the man of Knowledge, who has got this Knowledge matured directly attains Me, Vasudeva, who am the inmost Self**; (realizing)-in what way? that; Vasudeva is sarvam, all. such a one, who realizes Me Here adds the word Narayana, thus as the Self of all is mahatma, a high-souled one. There is none else who can equal or excel him. Therefore he is very rare among thousands of men, as it has been said (in verse 3, chapter 7). The reason why one does not realize that all this is verily Vasudeva, the Self...

English Translation of Swami Gambhirananda *(Can be skipped)*

7.19 Ante, at the end, after the completion; bahunam, of many; janmanam, births, which becme the repository for accumulating Ast. omits this word.-Tr. the tendencies leading to Knowledge; jnanavan, the man of Knowledge, who has got hiis Knowledge matured; directly prapadyate, attains; mam, Me, Vasudeva, who am the inmost Self; (realizing)-in what way?-iti, that; Vasudeva is sarvam, all. Sah, such a one, who realizes Me Here Ast. adds the word Narayana.-Tr. thus as the Self of all; is mahatma, a high-souled one. There is none else who can equal or excel him.Therefore he is su-durlabhah, very rare among thousands of men, as it has been said (in verse 3).The reason why one does not realize that all this is verily Vasudeva, the Self, is being stated:

vAsudeva, here is taken as Self, Atman, GYAna is the true nature and hence it is said here 'to know' and not 'to see'.

Bhagavan in Gita says

मनुष्याणां सहस्रेषु कश्चिद्यतति सिध्दये।
यततामपि सिध्दानां कश्चिन्मां वेत्ति तत्त्वतः।।7.3।।

manuṣyāṇāṅ sahasrēṣu kaścidyatati sidhdayē.

yatatāmapi sidhdānāṅ kaścinmāṅ vētti tattvataḥ..7.3..

7.3 Among thousands of men, one perchance strives for perfection; even among those successful strivers, only one perchance knows Me in essence (tatva).

Note: Here, bhagavan says 'knows' and not 'sees'. Also note that knows 'Me' in essence (tatva).

In BG 14.26, Bhagavan says,

मां च योऽव्यभिचारेण भक्तियोगेन सेवते।

स गुणान्समतीत्यैतान् ब्रह्मभूयाय कल्पते।।14.26।।

māṅ ca yō.vyabhicārēṇa bhaktiyōgēna sēvatē.

sa guṇānsamatītyaitān brahmabhūyāya kalpatē..14.26..

English translation by Swami Gambhirananda

14.26 And he who serves Me through the unswerving Yoga of Devotion, he, having gone beyond these qualities, qualifies for becoming Brahman.

In the next sloka, Bhagavan says,

ब्रह्मणो हि प्रतिष्ठाऽहममृतस्याव्ययस्य च।
शाश्वतस्य च धर्मस्य सुखस्यैकान्तिकस्य च।।14.27।।

brahmaṇō hi pratiṣṭhā.hamamṛtasyāvyayasya ca.
śāśvatasya ca dharmasya sukhasyaikāntikasya ca..14.27..

English translation by Swami Gambhirananda

14.27 For I am the Abode of Brahman-the indestructible and immutable, the eternal, the Dharma and absolute Bliss.

Adi Shankaracharya ji comments on this verse is:

Sanskrit commentary by Sri Sankaracharya

-- ब्रह्मणः परमात्मनः हि यस्मात् प्रतिष्ठा अहं प्रतितिष्ठति अस्मिन् इति प्रतिष्ठा अहं प्रत्यगात्मा। कीदृशस्य ब्रह्मणः? अमृतस्य अविनाशिनः अव्ययस्य अविकारिणः शाश्वतस्य च नित्यस्य धर्मस्य धर्मज्ञानस्य ज्ञानयोगधर्मप्राप्यस्य सुखस्य आनन्दरूपस्य ऐकान्तिकस्य अव्यभिचारिणः अमृतादिस्वभावस्य परमानन्दरूपस्य परमात्मनः प्रत्यगात्मा प्रतिष्ठा, सम्यग्ज्ञानेन परमात्मतया निश्चीयते। तदेतत् 'ब्रह्मभूयाय कल्पते (गीता 14।26)' इति उक्तम्। यया च ईश्वरशक्त्या भक्तानुग्रहादिप्रयोजनाय ब्रह्म प्रतिष्ठते प्रवर्तते, सा शक्तिः ब्रह्मैव अहम्, शक्तिशक्तिमतोः अनन्यत्वात् इत्यभिप्रायः। अथवा, ब्रह्मशब्दवाच्यत्वात् सविकल्पकं ब्रह्म। तस्य ब्रह्मणो

निर्विकल्पकः अहमेव नान्यः प्रतिष्ठा आश्रयः। किंविशिष्टस्य? अमृतस्य अमरणधर्मकस्य अव्ययस्य व्ययरहितस्य। किं च, शाश्वतस्य च नित्यस्य धर्मस्य ज्ञाननिष्ठालक्षणस्य सुखस्य तज्जनितस्य ऐकान्तिकस्य एकान्तनियतस्य च, 'प्रतिष्ठा अहम्' इति वर्तते।।इति श्रीमत्परमहंसपरिव्राजकाचार्यस्य श्रीगोविन्दभगवत्पूज्यपादशिष्यस्य श्रीमच्छंकरभगवतः कृतौ श्रीमद्भगवद्गीताभाष्येचतुर्दशोऽध्यायः। ।।14.27।।

Hindi translation by Sri Harikrishandas Goenka (on Sri Sankaracharya's Sanskrit Commentary)

ऐसा क्यों होता है? सो बतलाते हैं -- क्योंकि ब्रह्म -- परमात्माकी प्रतिष्ठा मैं हूँ। जिसमें प्रतिष्ठित हो वह प्रतिष्ठा है, इस व्युत्पत्तिके अनुसार मैं अन्तरात्मा (ब्रह्मकी) प्रतिष्ठा हूँ। कैसे ब्रह्मकी? (सो कहते हैं --) जो अमृत -- अविनाशी, अव्यय -- निर्विकार, शाश्वत -- नित्य, धर्मस्वरूप -- ज्ञानयोगरूप धर्मद्वारा प्राप्तव्य और ऐकान्तिक सुखस्वरूप अर्थात् व्यभिचाररहित आनन्दमय है उस ब्रह्मकी मैं प्रतिष्ठा हूँ। अमृत आदि स्वभाववाले परमात्माकी प्रतिष्ठा अन्तरात्मा ही है; क्योंकि यथार्थ ज्ञानसे वही परमात्मारूपसे निश्चित होता है। यही बात 'ब्रह्मभूयाय कल्पते' इस पदसे कही गयी है। अभिप्राय यह है कि जिस ईश्वरीय शक्तिसे भक्तोंपर अनुग्रह आदि करनेके लिये ब्रह्म प्रवर्तित होता है, वह शक्ति, मैं ब्रह्म ही हूँ; क्योंकि शक्ति और शक्तिमान्में भेद नहीं होता। अथवा (ऐसा समझना चाहिये कि) ब्रह्मशब्दका वाच्य होनेके कारण यहाँ सगुण ब्रह्मका ग्रहण है, उस सगुण ब्रह्मका मैं निर्विकल्प -- निर्गुण ब्रह्म ही प्रतिष्ठा -- आश्रय हूँ, दूसरा कोई नहीं। किन विशेषणोंसे युक्त सगुण ब्रह्मका? जो अमृत अर्थात् मरण-धर्मसे रहित है और अविनाशी अर्थात् क्षय होनेसे रहित है, उसका। तथा ज्ञाननिष्ठारूप शाश्वत-नित्य धर्मका और उससे होनेवाले ऐकान्तिक एकमात्र निश्चित परम आनन्दका भी, मैं ही आश्रय हूँ। 'अहं प्रतिष्ठा' यह पद यहाँ अनुवृत्तिसे लिया गया है ।।14.27।।

Simplified English Translation of commentary:

14.27 for, I, the inmost Self am the Abode-that in which something abides is pratistha-of Brahman which is the supreme Self. **Of Brahman of what kind? of that which is indestructible, immutable, and eternal; of that which is the Dharma, realizable through the Yoga of Jnana** which is called dharma (virtue); and of that which is the absolute, unfailing Bliss by nature. Since the inmost Self is the abode of the supreme Self-which by nature is immortal etc. therefore, through perfect Knowledge it (the former) is realized with certainty to be the supreme Self. **This has been stated in, 'he qualifies for becoming Brahman'.The purport is this: Indeed, that power of God through which Brahman sets out, comes forth, for the purpose of favouring the devotees, etc., that power which is Brahman Itself, am I. For, a power and the possesser of that power are non-different. Or, brahman means the conditioned Brahman, since It (too,) is referred to by that word. 'Of that Brahman, I Myself, the unconditioned Brahman-and none else-am the Abode.'**(The abode of Brahman) of what qualities? Of that which is immortal; of that which has the quality of deathlessness; **of that which is immutable, eternal and dharma having the characteristics of steadfastness in Knowledge; of that which is the absolute, unquestionably certain Bliss born of that (steadfastness);-'I am the Abode' is understood.**

English translation by Swami Gambhirananda (on Sri Sankaracharya's Sanskrit Commentary) *- Can be Skipped*

14.27 Hi, for; aham, I, the inmost Self; am the pratistha brahmanah, Abode-that in which something abides is pratistha-of Brahman which is the supreme Self. Of Brahman of what kind? Amrtasya, of that which is indestructible; avyayasya, of that which is immutable; and sasvatasya, of that which is eternal; dharmasya, of that which is the Dharma, realizable through the Yoga of Jnana which is called dharma (virtue); and aikantikasya sukhasya, of that which is the absolute, unfailing Bliss by nature.Since the inmost Self is the abode of the supreme Self-which by nature is immortal etc.-, therefore, through perfect Knowledge it (the former) is realized with certainty to be the supreme Self. This has been stated in, 'he qualifies for becoming Brahman'.The purport is this: Indeed, that power of God through which Brahman sets out, comes forth, for the purpose of favouring the devotees, etc., that power which is Brahman Itself, am I. For, a power and the possesser of that power are non-different. Or, brahman means the conditioned Brahman, since It (too,) is referred to by that word. 'Of that Brahman, I Myself, the unconditioned Brahman-and none else-am the Abode.'(The abode of Brahman) of what qualities? Of that which is immortal; of that which has the quality of deathlessness; of that which is immutable; so also, of that which is the eternal; which is the dharma having the characteristics of steadfastness in Knowledge; of that which is the absolute, unquestionably certain Bliss born of that (steadfastness);-'I am the Abode' is understood.

Summary of two verses BG 14.26 and BG14.27:

The above two verses indicate that Ishvara (SaguNa Brahman) and Brahman are not different. Krishna ParamAtmAn and Brahman are not different. Through knowledge, Brahman can be realized. 'I' in the verses describing PAramAtmAn can be taken as 'NirguNa Brahman'. sAguNa Brahman manifests through his mAyA and becomes active for showing his grace, bhakti to his beloved devotees.

A bhakta, by one-pointed devotion to Krishna ParamAtmAn (SaguNa Brahman) can become qualified for attaining Brahman. This is said in the intro of chapter 15 by Adi Sankara BhagavadpAda. Hence 'My Adobe' can be taken as Brahman. It should be noted that Krishna ParamAtmAn uses the word 'knows' and not 'sees'. Hence it is knowledge that gives Moksha. It should be further noted that bhagavAn always says that, 'I' am paramdhAma, paramgati and does not use the word 'vaikunTha'. So bhagavAn himself is param-dhAma, the supreme adobe. This supreme adobe is to be taken as nirguNa brahman. **nirguNa brahman is dhAma, the final destination, and is also supreme. It is a state of consciousness (super-consciousness)**

Advaita bhakti preached by Adi Sankara bhagavapAda

Our Acharya continues from Chapter 14, giving the intro of chapter 15, he says,

Because those doing karma (action), the fruits of karma and Jnani's fruit which is Jnana is under my control. Hence those bhakta-s (devotees), who worship me, by my grace, transcend three guNa-s attains moksha through the path of Knowledge (Jnana), then what to say about the knower of Atmatatva (Brahman) through Direct Experience? ...

Note:

In this Intro, our acharya says that even Bhakta-s who worship saguNa Brahman (Ishvara), transcend 3 guNa-s by the grace of Lord and then attain Moksha by path of Knowledge. This is an indirect path, while the direct path, is the path of Advaita or Jnana marg, who separates one self from 3 guNa-s and abides in his own Self, which is the Self of all. Our acharya says that though the bhakta may not initially do not have goal of Moksha and may not attentively and consciously separate 'I' from the 3 guNa-s or diassociates himself with 3 guNa-s, he still transcends them, unknowingly and naturally by the grace of Ishvara (Krishna PAramAtmAn) and qualifies for Jnana. This is because, the chitta becomes pure sattvik. Satva GuNa has tendency of Renunciation. So a person transforms his negative qualities and other guNa-s into sattva guNa or in other words, increases sattva guNa as a predominant guNa. Later on by grace of God, he transcends them. Jnani or an Advaitin uses his discriminative power while bhakta entirely depends upon God to transcend 3 guNa-s

MAyA has 3 guNa-s, nothing is made without the help of mAyA. mAyA is tri-guNAtmikA meaning consisting of 3 guNa-s (Satva, Rajas and tamas), to transcend 3 guNa-s means to abide in NirguNa brahman. Ishvara uses 3 guNa-s and mAyA, but is not affected by it. Ishvara is called as mAyApatI i.e. control of mAyA. The real nature of Ishvara is Brahman. Without mAyA Ishvara is NirguNa Brahman. Hence by transcending 3 guNas- and knowing to attaining his adobe means to Realize NirguNa Brahman.

In chapter 15, the peepal tree, which is inverted is imagined. Later in 15.3, Adi Shankara explains that the peepal tree is just an imagination and does not really exist. Only in ignorance it appears. With the weapon called detachment (a-sanga Sastra), one has to strike the tree (of Ignorance). By striking means to disassociate with 3 guNa-s and be free from dualities. Only with knowledge, one can attain Moksha. Later in BG 15.16-20, Lord explains why he is called as PuruSSottama.

In Mahabharat Moksha Dharma,, NArAyaNa, putting on the form of the entire universe, spoke to NArada and said, 'O nArada, this is a mere illusion (mAyA) projected by myself, whereby you see Me associated with the attributes of all creatures. Do not suppose that this is My true nature' (M. Bh. Mksha Dharma 339.45) explained in Br. Sutra. Bh. II.ii.17 (Source: Method of Vedanta, page 45)

In Uddhava Gita, Bhagavan uses 'Me' as 'Brahman'

We will take 2 verses from chapter 6

एवं जिज्ञासयाऽपोह्य नानात्व्भ्रममात्मनि ।
उपारमेत विरजं ्मनो मय्यर्प्य सर्वगे ॥ २१ ॥

6.21 Removing the delusion (illusion) of manifoldness in the Atman through such discrimination, one should cease from activities, holding the purified mind on Me, the Omnipresent One.

यद्यनीशो धारयितुं नमो ब्रह्मणि निश्चलम् ।
मयि सर्वाणि कर्मणि निरपेक्षः समाचर ॥ २२ ॥

6.22 If thou art unable to hold the mind steady on the Brahman, then perform all actions without caring for the results, giving them up unto me.

Krishna, a person, is symbolic representation of nirguNa brahman says aNu gItA

Anu Gita, a part of Mahabharata, (Adhyaya 16-19 Ashvamedhika) also known as Brahman Gita, as it is discussion between brahman and siddha, clarifies this stand that Bhagavan Krishna established himself in Brahman and then sung Gita

Arjun requests Bhagavan Krishna to repeat the discourse of Bhagavad Gita, to which BhagavAn replied:

Vâsudeva said:

From me, O son of Prithâ! you heard a mystery, and learnt about the eternal (principle), about piety in (its true) form, and about all the everlasting worlds. It is excessively disagreeable to me, that you should not have grasped it through want of intelligence. And the recollection (of it) now again is not possible (to me). Really, O son of Pându! you are devoid of faith and of a bad intellect. **And, O Dhanañjaya! it is not possible for me to repeat in full (what I said before). For that doctrine was perfectly adequate for understanding the seat, of the Brahman.** It is not possible for me to state it again in full in that way. For then accompanied by my mystic power, I declared to you the Supreme Brahman. But I shall relate an ancient story upon that subject, so that adhering to this knowledge, you may attain the highest goal. O best of the supporters of piety! listen to all that I say. (Once), O restrainer of foes! there came from the heavenly world and the world of Brahman, a Brâhmana difficult to withstand, and he was (duly) honored by us. (Now) listen, without entertaining any misgivings, O chief of the descendants of Bharata! O son of Prithâ! to what he said on being interrogated by us according to heavenly rules. (9-15)

Just like national flag, though only a small piece of cloth, represents the entire country, similarly, kruShNa, as person, represents the omnipresent, nirguNa brahman. kruShNa is bhagavAn, brahman and guru.

Conclusion

From the above analysis, we can assert that whenever supreme brahman is described by the use of words like bhagavAn, paramAtmA, parabrahman, brahman, 'I', 'Me', param-dhAma, param-gati, param-pada, it is always the stuti (praise) of nirguNa brahman, who is the substratum of entire creation and also of the trinity.

We also conclude that viShNu, nArAyaNa, Siva or guru does not necessarily mean the person and whenever their names are used to describe the all powerful, state, the substratum of entire creation and from which trinity manifests or that viShNu takes form of brahmA, viShNu and maheSa for creation, preservation and destruction, it is the description of nirguNa brahman only.

puruSa is the first manifestation of brahman, Adi SAnkarAcArya ji has consistently linked the final destination as nirguNa brahman.

We can also conclude that against the regular convention, where Adi Sankara's philosophy is viewed that supporting purely GYAna mArga, we can safely say that Adi Sankara had a big heart and he also preached advaita bhakti, where one can worship a form of ISvara and can still cross this ocean of samsAra, by the grace of ISvara.

Siva-viShNu-abheda

[under construction]

|| Hari OM ||

praNAm-s

SAstra-s proclaim Siva-viShNu abheda. They both are same as brahman. vaiShNava purANa-s praise viShNu as the supreme, while Saiva purANa-s praise Siva as supreme. They also proclaim that Siva and viShNu are different aspects of same brahman. Whenever they are praised as the supreme, the one who is the creator, preserver and destroyer, then it is meant to glorify the supreme brahman. The forms of viShNu and Siva are the most close to that of brahman and hence they are the best ones to meditate on. nirAkAra cannot be meditated. Beginners need a form to meditate and focus. Hence we are given forms of brahman as saguNa brahman, which are always rooted in brahman.

In this site, verses related to Siva-viShNu abheda are spread among many articles and pages. This page is an attempt to collect them all and put them in one place. WE will also try to add a few more verses from SAstra-s as and when time permits.

Adi Sankara believed in Siva-viShNu abheda. This is evident from the commentary on viShNu sahasranAma. This can be known by studying padaceda (beginning verses, setting pUrva bhumikA for sahasranAma), explanation of different names / attributes of viShNu bhagavAn like in 27 Siva and 114 rudra. in padaceda, Adi Sankara makes a clear point that

By using the word deva, bhagavAn, paramAtmA, mahAtmA, etc only one tatva is meant and this is AtmA / brahman. Whenever we read verses instructing us to meditate on GYAnasvarUpa or AtmasvarUpa bhagavAn, then it is not a personal deity, but only nirguNa brahman and nirAkAra brahman.

In order to establish Siva-viShNu-abheda, we will try to answer some obvious doubts that superficially look contradictory. We will also try to find a common factor.

Lets collect some objections that make us think that Siva and viShNu are not same.

1. purANa-s are classified as sAttvika, rAjasika and tAmasika. Hence not all purANa-s are authentic
2. Adi Sankara didnt consider Siva and viShNu as equal

3. There are verses in which we find that viShNu is superior than Siva

Lets take these objections one by one

1. purANa-s are classified as sAttvika, rAjasika and tAmasika. Hence not all purANa-s are authentic.

A page is dedicated to explaining that Adi Sankara and so non of the advaitins consider any purANa as unauthentic. Please visit Authenticity of Puranas, Up-puranas and Sthala Puranas. We will only list main points in brief.

1. Verses in padma purANa classification in padma purana are interpolated / fabricated by vested interest group.
2. Another classification exists in padma purANa, svarga khaNDa, wihch says that all the purANa-s being manifestation of different parts of Sri Hari's body are very sacred and capable of bestowing salvation.
3. None of advaita AcArya-s consider any purANa as sAttvika, rAjasik or tAmasik
4. No veda or upanishad or Mahabharata is classified as sAttvika, rAjasik or tAmasik.
5. No purana says that Siva is born. rudra, is an aspect of Siva.

There are verses in padma purANa that contradict controversial verses clasifying purANa-s in various categories.

There are some verses in Padma Purana, Uttara-khanda, 236.18–21 which categorize each of 18 major purANa-s into sAttvika, rAjasika and tamasika. Lets analyse them.

Satvika Puranas:

वैष्णवं नारदीयं च तथा भागवतं शुभम् ।
गारुडं च तथा पाद्मं वाराहं शुभदर्शने ।
सात्विकानि पुराणानि विज्ञेयानि शुभानि वै ।।

Vishnu Purana, Naradiya Puran, Padma Purana, Garuda Purana, Varaha Purana, Srimad Bhagavata Purana (236.18)

Rajasa Puranas:

ब्रह्माण्डं ब्रह्मवैवर्तं मार्कण्डेयं तथैव च ।
भविष्यं वामनं ब्राह्मं राजसानि निबोधत ।।

Brahmanda Purana, Brahmavaivarta, Markandeya Purana, Bhavishya Purana, Vamana Purana, Brahma Purana (236.19)

Tamasa Puranas :

मात्सयं कौर्मं तथा लैङ्गम् शैवं स्कान्दं तथैव च ।
आग्नेयं च षडेतानि तामसानि निबोधत ।।

Matsya Purana, Kurma Purana, Linga Purana, Shiva Purana, Skanda Purana, Agni Purana (236.20)

सात्विका मोक्षदाः प्रोक्ताः राजसा सर्वदा अशुभाः ।
तथैव तामसा देवि निरयप्राप्तिहेतवः ।।

प.पु. उत्तर 236.21

Among these puranas Satvika Puranas lead one to liberation, Rajasa do not cause good and tamasa puranas lead one to hell. (236.21)

These verses are contradicted by following verses which show that all purANa-s are parts of Sri hari

According to Maharshi Suta, all the Puranas are nothing but the mediums through which Sri Hari manifests himself

एकं पुराण रुप वै तत्र पाद्मं परं महत् । ब्रह्मं मूर्धा हरेरेव ह्रदयं पद्मसंज्ञकम्॥
वैष्णवं दक्षिणो बाहुः शैव वामो महेशितुः । उरु भागवतं प्रोक्तं नाभिः स्यान्नारदीयकम्॥
मार्कण्डेयं च दक्षांघ्रिर्वामो ह्याग्रेयमुच्यते । भविष्यं दक्षिणो जानुर्विष्णोरेव महात्मनः ॥
ब्रह्मवैवर्तसंज्ञं तु वामज्जानुस्नदाहृतः । लैऽगैं तु गुल्फकं दक्षं वाराहं वामगुल्फकम् ॥
स्कान्दं पुराण लोमानित्वगस्य वामनं स्मृतम् । कौर्म पृष्ठं समाख्यातं मात्स्यं मेदः प्रकी्र्तितम् ॥
मज्जा तु गारुडं प्रोक्तं ब्रह्माण्डमस्थि गीयते । एवमेवाभवद्विष्णुः पुराणाव्यवो हरिः ॥

पद्म पुराण, स्वर्ग खण्ड (६२।२-७)

1. Brahma Purana is said to be the 'forehead' of Sri Hari,
2. Padma Purana is said to be the 'heart' of Sri Hari,
3. Vishnu Purana is said to be the 'right arm' of Sri Hari.
4. Shiva Purana is said to be the 'left arm' of Sri Hari.
5. Srimad Bhagawat is said to be his 'thigh',
6. Narada Purana is said to be his 'navel',
7. Markendeya Purana is said to be his 'right-foot'.
8. Agni Purana is said to be his 'left foot',
9. Bhavishya Purana is said to be his 'right-knee',
10. Brahma Vaivrata Purana is said to be his 'left-knee'.
11. Linga Purana is said to be his 'right ankle',
12. Varaha Purana is said to be his 'left ankle',
13. Skanda Purana is said to be the hair on the body of 'Sri Hari'.
14. Vamana Purana is said to be his 'skin'.
15. Kurma Purana is said to be his 'back'.
16. Matsya Purana is said to be his 'stomach'.
17. Garuda Purana is said to be his 'bone-marrow'.
18. Brahmanda Purana is said to be his 'bone'.

Padma Purana, svarga khaNDa (62.2-7)

Note: These versies are found on both version of padma purana - south Indian with 5 khanda-s and bengali with 7 khanda-s.

We can conclude that, all the Puranas being manifestation of different parts of Sri Hari's body are very sacred and capable of bestowing salvation.

For a body to function properly, all parts are important.

Source: Padma Puarana, Swarga Khand, International Gita Society / sankshipta Padma Purana

According to Padma Purana, there was just one purana, which was split into 18 by Bhagavan Veda Vyasa. Considering the above logic that no veda or upanishad or Mahabharata is classified as sAttvika, rAjasik or tAmasik, the original one purANa cannot have classifications as sAttvika, rAjasika or tAmasika. Since they are split in 18 by bhagavAn veda vyAsa, hence it is unwise to say that he messed various kalpa-s and so there are contradictions in purANa-s. These is no point to write something and then say that, 'it's worthless, dont practice it'.

[under construction]

Hari-Hara aikyavAda in the Harivamsa

na cha tau pashyate kechidyoginau yogamAgatau |
eko brahma tathA kR^itvA pashya.NllokAnpitAmahaH ||2-125-23

No one else could realize that both kR^iShNa and shiva are one with yoga. Only the grandfather brahma who has seen the world has made them so, realized them as one.

uvAchaitatsamuddishya mArkaNDeyaM sanAradam |
pArshvasthaM paripaprachCha j~nAtvA vai dIrghadarshinam ||2-125-24

Immediately brahmA spoke about this to mArkaNDeya and nArada, who were nearby, knowing that they are endowed with a vision for future.

pitAmaha uvAcha
mandarasya gireH pArshve nalinyAM bhavakeshavau |
rAtrau svapnAntare brahmanmayA dR^iShTau harAchyutau ||2-125-25

grandfather (brahmA) said:
O those with the soul of brahman (O mArkaNDeya and nArada)! I saw both bhava (shiva) and keshava (kR^iShNa), hara (shiva) and the one not having any decline (kR^iShNa), in a dream, in the night near a lake by the side of mountain mandara.

haraM cha harirUpeNa hariM cha hararUpiNam |
sha~NkhachakragadApANiM pItAmbaradharaM haram ||2-125-26
I saw hara (shiva) in the form of hari (kR^iShNa - viShNu) and hari (kR^iShNa - viShNu) in the form of hara (shiva). hara (shiva) was seen as holding the conch, chakra, mace and wearing a yellow garment (like viShNu).

trishUlapaTTishadharaM vyAghracharmadharaM harim |
garuDasthaM chApi haraM hariM cha vR^iShabhadhvajam ||2-125-27

I saw hari (kR^iShNa - viShNu) holding the trident, three point spear and wearing the tiger skin. hara (shiva) was mounted on garuDa and hari (kR^iShNa - viShNu) was having the flag of the bull.

vismayo me mahAnbrahmandR^iShTvA tatparamAdbhutam |
etadAchakShva bhagavanyAthAtathyena suvrata ||2-125-28

O those with the soul of brahman (O mArkaNDeya and nArada)! Seeing that most superior wonder, I was wonderstruck. O lord! O the one who observes good penances! Please describe the secret of this in the proper way.

mArkaNDeya uvAcha

shivAya viShNurUpAya viShNave shivarUpiNe |
yathAntaraM na pashyAmi tena tau dishataH shivam ||2-125-29

mArkaNDeya said:

I do not see any difference between shiva in the form of viShNu and viShNu in the form of shiva. They provide auspiciousness to the world.

anAdimadhyanidhanametadakShara
mavyayam |
tadeva te pravakShyAmi rUpaM hariharAtmakam ||2-125-30

I proclaim that the form with the soul of hari (viShNu) and hara (shiva) has no beginning, middle and end (destruction). This form is imperishable and having no decline.

yo viShNuH sa tu vai rudro yo rudraH sa pitAmahaH |
ekA mUrtistrayo devA rudraviShNupitAmahAH ||2-125-31

The one who is viShNu is shiva himself. The one who is shiva is the grandfather. The manifestation is one for the three lords, rudra (shiva), viShNu (kR^iShNa) and the grandfather (brahmA).

varadA lokakartAro lokanAthAH svayaMbhuvaH |
ardhanArIshvarAste tu vrataM tIvraM samAsthitAH ||2-125-32

They provide boons, they are the creators of the world, they are lords of the world, they are born from themselves, they are the half woman-man lord, observing severe penances.

yathA jale jalaM kShiptaM jalameva tu tadbhavet |
rudraM viShNuH praviShTastu tathA rudramayo bhavet ||2-125-33

As water that falls on water becomes water, when viShNu enters rudra (shiva), he (viShNu) will become full of rudra (shiva).

agnimagniH praviShTastu agnireva yathA bhavet |
tathA viShNuM praviShTastu rudro viShNumayo bhavet ||2-125-34

As fire that enters fire becomes fire, when rudra (shiva) enters viShNu, he (rudra, shiva) will become full of viShNu.

rudramagnimayaM vidyAdviShNuH somAtmakaH smR^itaH |
agnIShomAtmakaM chaiva jagatsthAvaraja~Ngamam ||2-125-35

Remember that rudra (shiva) has the soul of fire and viShNu has the soul of soma (nectar, moon). All the world including the fixed and movable beings have the combined souls of fire and soma (shiva and viShNu).

kartArau chApahartArau sthAvarasya charasya tu |
jagataH shubhakartArau prabhaviShNU maheshvarau ||2-125-36

Splendorous viShNu and the great lord (shiva) - both do good for the world. They are the creators as well as the destroyers of the fixed and moving beings.

kartR^ikAraNakartArau kartR^ikAraNakArakau |
bhUtabhavyabhavau devau nArAyaNamaheshvarau ||2-125-37

Both the lords, nArAyaNa (viShNu) and the great lord (shiva) are the creators of the creation and reason. They are the creators of all beings. Both of them are the past, future and the present.

[jagataH pAlakAvetAvetau sR^iShTikarau smR^itau] |
[They are remembered as the sustainers and the creators of the world.]
ete chaiva pravarShanti bhAnti vAnti sR^ijanti cha |
etatparataraM guhyaM kathitaM te pitAmaha ||2-125-38

They alone cause the rain in the world , light up the world (as sun), move in the world (as wind) and create the world. O grandfather! I have described the highest secret to you.

yashchainaM paThate nityaM yashchainaM shR^iNuyAnnaraH |
prApnoti paramaM sthAnaM viShNurudraprasAdajam ||2-125-39

The man who studies this daily and the one who hears it (daily) will ultimately attain the highest place due to the pleasure of viShNu and rudra.

devau hariharau stoShye brahmaNA saha sa~Ngatau |
etau cha paramau devau jagataH prabhavApyayau ||2-125-40

I worship the lords hari (viShNu) and hara (shiva) along with brahmA. They are the supreme lords, responsible for the creation and destruction of the world.

rudrasya paramo viShNurviShNoshcha paramaH shivaH |
eka eva dvidhA bhUto loke charati nityashaH ||2-125-41

The supreme lord of rudra (shiva) is viShNu and the supreme lord of viShNu is shiva (rudra). The same lord is moving in the world always in two forms.

na vinA sha~NkaraM viShNurna vinA keshavaM shivaH |
tasmAdekatvamAyAtau rudropendrau tu tau purA |

viShNu does not exist without sha~Nkara (shiva) and shiva does not exist without keshava (viShNu). Hence, rudra (shiva) and upendra (kR^iShNa - viShNu) have attained oneness, since long before.

namo rudrAya kR^iShNAya namaH saMhatachAriNe ||2-125-42
I bow to rudra (shiva). I bow to kR^iShNa. I bow to the one moving in the combined form.

namaH ShaDardhanetrAya sadvinetrAya vai namaH |
namaH pi~NgalanetrAya padmanetrAya vai namaH ||2-125-43

I bow to the one having half of six (three) eyes (shiva). I bow to the one having two eyes (viShNu). I bow to the one having reddish brown eyes (shiva). I bow to the one having eyes as beautiful as the lotus flower (viShNu).

namaH kumAragurave pradyumnagurave namaH |
namo dharaNIdharAya ga~NgAdharAya vai namaH ||2-125-44

I bow to the preceptor (shiva) of kumara (subrahmaNya). I bow to the preceptor of pradyumna (kR^iShNa - viShNu). I bow to the one who holds the earth (viShNu). I bow to the one who carries ga~Nga (shiva).

namo mayUrapichChAya namaH keyUradhAriNe |
namaH kapAlamAlAya vanamAlAya vai namaH ||2-125-45

I bow to the one who wears peacock feather (kR^iShNa - viShNu). I bow to the one having bracelets of serpents (shiva). I bow to the one wearing a garland of skulls (shiva). I bow to the one wearing a garland of forest flowers (viShNu).

namastrishUlahastAya chakrahastAya vai namaH |
namaH kanakadaNDAya namaste brahmadaNDine ||2-125-46

I bow to the one holding the trident (shiva). I bow to the one holding the chakra (viShNu). I bow to the one holding the golden staff (viShNu). I bow to the one holding the staff of brahma (shiva).

namashcharmanivAsAya namaste pItavAsase |
namo.astu lakShmIpataye umAyAH pataye namaH ||2-125-47

I bow to the one wearing the tiger skin (shiva). I bow to the one wearing the yellow dress. I bow to the husband of lakShmI (viShNu). I bow to the husband of umA (shiva).

namaH khaTvA~NgadhArAya namo musaladhAriNe |
namo bhasmA~NgarAgAya namaH kR^iShNA~NgadhAriNe ||2-125-48

I bow to the one holding a staff with skull on top (khaTvA~Nga) (shiva). I

bow to the one holding the mace (balarAma - viShNu). I bow to the one who smears ashes on the body (shiva). I bow to the one having a dark body (kR^iShNa - viShNu).

namaH shmashAnavAsAya namaH sAgaravAsine |
namo vR^iShabhavAhAya namo garuDavAhine ||2-125-49

I bow to the one who lives in the burial places (shiva). I bow to the one who lives in the ocean (viShNu). I bow to the one having the bull as his vehicle (shiva). I bow to the one having garuDa as his vehicle (viShNu).

namastvanekarUpAya bahurUpAya vai namaH |
namaH pralayakartre cha namastrailokyadhAriNe ||2-125-50

I bow to the one having not one (many) form (viShNu). I bow to the one having numerous forms (shiva). I bow to the creator of deluge (shiva). I bow to the one who holds the three worlds (viShNu).

namo.astu saumyarUpAya namo bhairavarUpiNe |
virUpAkShAya devAya namaH saumyekShaNAya cha ||2-125-51

I bow to the one having a gentle form (viShNu). I bow to the one having a terrible form (shiva). I bow to the lord who is diversely eyed (shiva). I bow to the one having a gentle look.

dakShayaj~navinAshAya balerniyamanAya cha |
namaH parvatavAsAya namaH sAgaravAsine ||2-125-52

I bow to the destroyer of the sacrifice of dakSha (shiva). I bow to the one who bound bali (vAmana - viShNu). I bow to the one who resides on the mountain (shiva). I bow to the one who resides in the ocean (vishNu).

namaH suraripughnAya tripuraghnAya vai namaH |
namo.astu narakaghnAya namaH kAmA~nganAshine ||2-125-53

I bow to the slayer of the enemies of deva-s (viShNu). I bow to the slayer of tripura-s (shiva). I bow to the slayer of naraka (kR^iShNa - viShNu). I bow to the one who destroyed the limbs (and body) of kAma (shiva).

namastvandhakanAshAya namaH kaiTabhanAshine |
namaH sahasrahastAya namo.asa~NkhyeyabAhave ||2-125-54

I bow to the slayer of andhaka (shiva). I bow to the slayer of kaiTabha (viShNu). I bow to the one having thousand arms (viShNu). I bow to the one having many arms (shiva).

namaH sahasrashIrShAya bahushIrShAya vai namaH |
dAmodarAya devAya mu~njamekhaline namaH ||2-125-55

I bow to the one having thousand heads (viShNu). I bow to the one having many heads (shiva). I bow to lord dAmodara (kR^iShNa - viShNu). I bow to the lord wearing garland of grass on his waist.

namaste bhagavanviShNo namaste bhagava~nChiva |
namaste bhagavandeva namaste devapUjita ||2-125-56

O lord viShNu! I bow to you. O lord shiva! I bow to you. O lord! I bow to you. O lord who is worshipped by the gods! I bow to you.

namaste sAmabhirgIta namaste yajubhiH saha |
namaste surashatrughna namaste surapUjita |

O lord who is praised by the verses of sAma! I bow to you. O lord who is praised by the verses of yajus! I bow to you. I bow to you! O slayer of the enemies of deva-s! O the one who is worshipped by deva-s! I bow to you.

namaste karmiNAM karma namo.amitaparAkrama |
hR^iShIkesha namaste.astu svarNakesha namo.astu te ||2-125-57

I bow to the lord who is the action of the performers. I bow to the one having unlimited valiance! O the lord of senses (viShNu)! I bow to you. O the one with golden hair (shiva)! I bow to you.

imam stavaM yo rudrasya viShNoshchaiva mahAtmanaH |
sametya R^iShibhiH sarvaiH stutau stauti maharShibhiH ||2-125-58

This hymn of the great souls, rudra (shiva) and viShNu is recited by all sages. This hymn is sung by all the great sages such as,

vyAsena vedaviduShA nAradena cha dhImatA |
bhAradvAjena gargeNa vishvAmitreNa vai tathA ||2-125-59

vyAsa, the expert of veda-s, nArada having intellect, bhAradvAja, garga as well as vishvAmitra,

agastyena pulastyena dhaumyena cha mahAtmanA |

and also the great souls agastya, pulastya and dhaumya.

ya idaM paThate nityaM stotraM hariharAtmakam ||2-125-60
arogA balavAMshchaiva jAyate nAtra saMshayaH |

Those who study this hymn of hari (viShNu) and hara (shiva) daily will become free of any disease and also will become strong. There is no doubt.

shriyaM cha labhate nityaM na cha svargAnnivartate ||2-125-61
aputro labhate putram kanyA vindati satpatim |

They will always obtain prosperity. They will never be turned away from heaven. The childless will get children and maiden will get a good husband.

gurviNI shR^iNute yA tu varaM putraM prasUyate ||2-125-62

If a pregnant woman hears this hymn, she will deliver a best son.

rAkShasAshcha pishAchAshcha vighnAni cha vinAyakaH |
bhayaM tatra na kurvanti yatrAyaM paThyate stavaH ||2-125-63

Demons, imps, obstacles and also vinAyaka will not create any fear where this hymn is recited.

iti shrImahAbhArate khileShu harivaMshe viShNuparvaNi hariharAtmakastavo nAma pa~nchaviMshatyadhikashatatamo.adhyAyaH

Thus this is the one hundred and twenty fifth chapter of viShNuparva, harivaMsha, khila of mahabhArata, fighting stops between rudra and KR^iShNa and Hymn to harihara

Note 1: brahmA is referring to shiva's words to bANa:

dhvajasyAsya yadA bha~Ngastava tAta bhaviShyati |
svasthAne sthApitasyAtha tadA yuddhaM bhaviShyati ||2-116-31

O son! When your flagstaff, installed at its place, is broken, then there will be a battle.

Credits and Source:

http://mahabharata-resources.org/harivamsa/vishnuparva/hv_2_125.html
http://www.advaita-vedanta.org/archives/advaita-l/2016-July/041758.html

via Sri V. Subramanian ji

CLEARING ACCUSATIONS & DOUBTS

A Note to Readers

Pranams. Before beginning this section, I would like to request readers to understand some facts. The very purpose of spirituality and of Upadesha-s is to uproot Ego. An Upadesha is anything which is done or said with the intention of lifting a disciple to the highest truth. Kanchi Paramacharya says, an upadesha can be maun (silence), a mantrOpadesha (initiating disciple by giving a mantra), sparshadikshA (touching a disciple and blessing him), smaraNadikshA (remembering disciple from distance), rising kundalini of disciple, imparting spiritual instruction or even a prayer by Guru for disciple to help him rise above ocean of samsAra. True saints do not speak ill of anyone, nor do they teach something and live a different life. Their life itself is a teaching, an updesha. As one progresses in spirituality, one becomes very soft from within. All paths, including advaita, depend upon God's grace. One who has surrendered to God and meditates on him with full faith, God gradually removes devotee's ego. God also makes one experience that the progress is only and only due to his grace and Guru's grace and a seeker has no control over his progress. As one progresses, lower emotions gets replaced by higher emotions. Intolerance, accusations, cannot dwell in any true saint, no matter whatever sampradAya he belongs to. I personally believe that none of AchArya-s have actually accused each other. This is because our shastra-s do not teach us to accuse. Gita does not teach us to accuse, hence an AchArya who writes commentaries Gita and other shruti-s cannot write anything negative, specially when Bhagavan in chapter 2, 55-59, describes sthitapraGYa laxaNa (qualities of a Self Realized person). AchArya-s praise their chosen deity and ask for one-pointed devotion, but themselves do not denigrate other deities. Unfortunately immature disciples, who are not free from lower emotions wrongly or purposefully interpret commentaries in convoluted way. In this process, they defame their own AcArya. My personal opinion is that to live in communal harmony, it is best to adopt nAhI nindA nyAya, meaning not to criticize anyone. This does not mean one should not praise own sampradAya or chosen deity. If you are convinced, there is no need to read any further, as reading accusations might upset you. Even though I have attempted to answer them, still it will only increase discomfort, as one becomes aware that there are people who accuse our sampradAya and so we need to defend ourselves. There would be a permanent change in the behaviour, as now you have passed through a through patch. In this context, if you are 'Mind your own business' type, it is better not to read any further. Feel Compassion for accusers, pray to God to show them correct way and the truth and move on. Good luck for your spiritual progress.

If you are the one who thinks that we should know about accusations by rival sampradAya-s and you should be prepared for them, then continue to read on.

For a laymen, it is very difficult to counter arguments. A laymen does not study tons of SAStra-s of their and rival sampradAya-s. I am such laymen. When I first read accusations, I was a bit hurt and spend a lot of time collecting information. Not being blessed by sharp intellect and retention power made things difficult for me. Lack of sanskrit knowledge added the difficulty, as laymen would not bother studying sanskrit and keep piling up layer

and after layers. We do not study shastra-s for intellectual gain, but for our inner progress and Atmic upliftment. Hence meaning of verse is more important, which can be conveyed by reading proper translation and listening to audio / video discourses. But to defend our faith and sampradAya, one needs to dig a little deep, which is time consuming. It also derails us from our path. Continuous critical examination a verse or a canonical text like purana or a granth or independent works of a saint and thinking like a historian may result in losing one's bhakti. Lastly I would say that if I could manage and reply to accusations and general doubts, then, with little effort, anyone can do. Reading further is left to you, but as said, if you do not mind others speaking anything and do not take it to your heart, i.e. you are easy-to-go guy, then you may not read any further.

If you have taken resolve to read further, well, it's not that dangerous, then should I say, 'Let's begin' :)

Quoting Padma Purana to accuse Adi Shankara - Refutation of *mAyAvAdam asatSAstraM Praccanam baudham uchyate*

Vaishnava-s have raised logical objections to philosophy of Advaita. Logical objections raised by Vaishnavas are already successfully replied by

- Adi Shankara's work vAkya Vritti in which Adi Shankara explains two mAhA vAkya-s - *Tat Tvam Asi* and *Aham Brahmasmi*. Adi Shankara's sutra bhAshya also refutes other systems.
- VidyaraNya Swami in his work PanchAdasi, and Jivan Mukti Viveka
- Sureshvaracharya's Naishkarmya Siddhi and
- Madhusudan Saraswati's celebrated works Advaita Siddhi and Siddhanta Bindu, a commentary on Shri Adi Shankara's Dasa Sloki
- Swami Sacchidanandendra Saraswati's critical Study 'Vedanta PrakriyA Pratyabhigya' (Method of Vedanta in English - A critical Study) and 'Shuddha Shankara PrakriyA BhAskara'

We will move to refuting accusations.

In the Padma Purana, there are verses wherein Shiva tells Parvati that he will appear in the age of Kali as a brahmana (Brahmin) to preach *asat-sastra*. Vaishnava-s Specially Gaudiya-Vaishnava-s use this verses to accuse our acharya and Advaita Vedanta.

mAyAvAdam asachchAstraM prachchannaM bauddha ucyate |

mayaivakathitaM devikalau brAhmaNa rUpiNA || *Pa Pur 6.236.7* ||

The doctrine of MAyA (illusion) is a wicked doctrine (preaching false shastra) and said to be pseudo-Buddhist. I myself, of the form of a brAhmana, will proclaim it in Kali (age). (Padma PurANa, uttara-khaNDa, 6.236.7)

vedarthan maha-sastram mayavadam avaidikam

mayaiva kathitam devi jagatam nasakaranat || Pa Pur 6.236.11 ||

This powerful doctrine of Mayavada resembles the Vedas, but is by nature non-Vedic. O goddess, I propagate this philosophy in order to destroy the world. (Padma Purana 6.236.11)

For time being, we will consider these verses are authentic and not an interpolation as a result of hatred against Advaitins and Shankara.

Using these verses Vaishnava-s accuse our acharya and Advaita Vedanta.

They conclude that

- Vaishnavas say that Lord Shiva will incarnate by the will or order of supreme personality of Godhead (Lord Krishna).
- Lord Shiva will come to destroy the world and will spread mAyAvAda which is an asata shAstra and nothing but hidden Buddhism.
- Vaishnava-s argue that, the Brahmin described in these verses is none other than Adi Shankaracharya.
- Recently, reformists and ISKCON leaders also accuse that Shankara was biased with Brahmins.

Hence they accuse our acharya and Advaita as

1. Adi Shankara's Kevala Advaita is nothing but mAyAvAda. Hence, Adi Shankara was spreading Asat shastra and those who follow him will be doomed. Some even go on to say that he was demon who walked on earth.
2. Adi Shankara and his Grand Guru (Param Guru) Shri GauDapadAcharya were hidden Buddhists. Philosophy of ajAta vAda was adopted from a famous Buddhist NAgArjuna.
3. Adi Shankara's teachings are non-vedic.

There are many more accusations and objections. They are dealt later in this section.

We will take some logical arguments with relation to accusations.

1. None of the verses directly name Adi Shankaracharya.

2. Kaliyug (Kali Yuga) has not ended and so before it ends we cannot conclude that Shankara was teaching maayaavad. It's too early to conclude anything before Lord Kalki appears. According to Brahma-vaivartana Purana, Kali Yuga will last for 10,000 years, which starts after Bhagavan Krishna left his physical body i.e. returned to Vaikuntha, which happened 5400 years ago. Hence, we are in later half of Kali Yuga. According to bhAgavat purANa, the age of kAlI is 432,000 years. Hence we are in first phase of kAlI yuga.

3. If Lord Shiva is given the task of misleading this world to begin it's destruction, then why would other avatars, i.e. Vaishnav acharyas and Chaitanya Mahaprabhu would incarnate after Adi Shankaracharya? If it is the will of God to destroy this world, then none can stop it. Krishna said that the whole Yadav dynasty will be whitewashed and Dvarka will be submerged under water. That's what happened. None would stop this destruction. None could Stop Bhagavan Parashurama who killed kshatriyas for 21 generations.

4. varNA is by guNa but guNa is inherited by birth is accepted by all major acharya-s.

5. Atleast 3 Matts of Adi Shankara are build in NArAyaNa dham - Joshi Matt at Badrinath, Dwarka Matt at Dwarka and Puri Matt dedicated and build in memory of Jagannatha Puri. To add to it, Kanchikoti peetha is dedicated to KAmAkhyA Devi, Sharada matt, as the name indicates is dedicated to Sarada Devi. This sows that Adi Shankara was absolutely neutral and not against idol worship.

6. Devotional hymms composed by Shri Adi Shankara are proofs of him being a Vaishnav, a Shaiva, a Shakta all at a time by being an advaitin.

7. Siddhanta Shaiva-s do not believe in AvatarvAda. According to them, Shiva Does not take any avatAra. Shiva Appears and disappears, but does not take birth like Rama and Krishna. They do not believe that Adi Shankara was an Avatar of Lord Shiva. In support of their theory, they say that, if Adi Shankara was an Avatar of Shiva than who was Chandala (Chandala was Lord Shiva who appeared in disguise. After Adi Shankara knew his mistake, Lord Revealed his true form. Four dogs he carried, transformed into four veda-s). According to this theory, Adi Shankara cannot be accused of preaching mAyAvAda.

8. According to the legend, Adi Shankara's Guru was an avatar of Lord Vishnu's Shesha nAga. How can he teach asat shastra or mAyAvAda. GovindapAda, in his earlier avatar was Maharshi Patanjali. We have Adi Shankara's beautiful commentary of 28 verses on Patanjali Yoga Sutra-s

We will later talk about interpolations in Padma Purana, where the verses which categorizes different purANa-s are of dubious of being interpolations.

Lets explore related verses from Padma Purana for better understanding

To understand the verses targeted against us and our acharya, Lets analyze more verses i.e. 3.236.7 to 3.236.11 for better understanding and see if they point to our acharya Sri Adi Shankara and Advaita Vedanta.

mAyAvAdamasachchAstraMprachchannaMbauddha ucyate |
mayaivakathitaMdevikalaubrAhmaNarUpiNA || *Pa Pur 6.236.7* ||

The doctrine of MAyA (illusion) is a wicked doctrine and said to be **pseudo-Buddhist**. I myself, **in the form of a brAhmana**, proclaimed it in Kali (age). (padma puraaNa, uttara-khaNDa, 236.7)

apaarthaMshrutivAkyAnAMdarshayanlokagarhitam |
svakarmarUpaMtyAjyatvamatraivapratipaadhyate || *Pa Pur 6.236.8* ||

It shows the meaninglessness of the words of the holy texts and is condemned in the world. **In this (doctrine) only the giving up of one's own duties is expounded.** (padma puraaNa, uttara-khaNDa, 236.8)

sarvakarmaparibhraShTairvaidharmmatvaMtaduchyate |
pareshajiivapAraikyaMmayAtupratipAdhyate || *Pa Pur 6.236.9* ||

And that is said to be religiousness by those who have fallen from all duties. I have propounded the identity of the Highest Lord and the (individual) soul. (padma PuraaNa, uttara-khaNDa, 236.9)

brahmaNosyasvayaMmrUpaMnirguNaMvakshyate mayA |
sarvasyajagatopyatramohanAarthaMkalauyuge || *Pa Pur 6.236.10* ||

vedArthavanmahAshAstraMmAyayAyadavaidikam |
mayaivakalpitaMdevijagatANAshakAraNAt || *Pa Pur 6.236.11* ||

I stated this Brahman's nature to be qualityless. O goddess, I myself have conceived, for the destruction of the worlds, and for deluding the world in this Kali age, **the great doctrine resembling the purport of the Vedas, (but) non-Vedic** due to the principle of Maayaa (illusion) (present in it). *(Padma PuRANa 6.236.10-11)*

Let's analyse important words:

The doctrine of MAyA (*mAyA vAdam asat SAstraM)*

Advaita is not mAyAvAda, It is BrahmavAda. To understand this we will analyse our mahAvAkya-s

1. प्रज्ञानम् ब्रह्म *Prajñānam brahma*

Consciousness is Brahman - Rig Veda, Aitreya Upanishad 3.3

2. अहं ब्रह्मास्मि *Aham brahmāsmi*

I am Brahman - Yajur Veda, bruhadAraNyaka (Brihad-araNyaka) Upanishad - 1.4.10

3. तत्वमसि *Tattvamasi - Tat Tvam Asi*

That thou art - meaning That (Brahman) is you) - Sama Veda, Chandogya Upanishad - 6.8.7

4. अयमात्मा ब्रह्म *Ayamātmā brahma*

This Atman is Brahman - Atharva Veda, Mandukya Upanishad 2)

Nowhere in these mahAvAkya-s the word mAyA appears. Word Brahman appears in all the mahAvAkya-s. mAyA is not given importance, but it is Brahman that is given importance. We will understand later as why advaita vedanta is BrahmavAda. Since four mahAvAkyA-s are from four different upanishads, which are Jnana-kand, associated with four different veda-s, we can conclude that shruti teaches unity of Atman and Brahman. Earlier in section Understanding Advaita, we have studied that why concept of mAyA is important, why mAyA is talked too much (in the beginning) and that finally mAyA is neglected and renounced to enter into non-dual state.

All AcArya-s (including mAdhvAcArya) agree that there are two realities

1. Independent Reality - ISvara
2. Dependent Reality - Creation of ISvara

Advaita also accepts both these realities. The independent reality is called as Absolute reality and in reality, it is the only one which exists. The dependent reality is the one which is created by ISvara. It is relative reality. Advaita also accepts jIva and the world as real, but only on the plane relative reality. From absolute POV, only brahman exists. Since mAyA or it's creation, jIva bhAva is not experienced in nirvikalpa samAdhi, hence following the definition of real and unreal as per BG 2.16, we consider everything other than brahman as mithyA. Things are taken as negatively and mAyA, as ilusion is an overblown concept. mAyA is mithyA from absolute standpoint. From practical POV, we do feel it, hence it is not completely false.

Pseudo-buddhist (*prachchannaM bauddha)*

The doctrine shares some common terminology with Buddhism. Still it holds major difference. We will see it later in this section.

Of the form of Brahmana (Brahmin): (*brAhmaNa rUpiNA)*

It is true that Adi Shankara was born as a Brahmin. SanyAsin is above varNa. while taking sanyAsa, it is customary to drop all kAmya karma (sacrifices, rituals and so agni). When Adi Shankara went to his guru GovindapAda, his guru asked him his introduction. Adi Shankara did not say that he was Brahmin, but he expounded Advaitic verses describing the Brahman. This sloka-s are famous as dasa-sloki meaning ten verses.

In the above verse, it is said that Shiva in the form of Brahmana. This means that this avatar of Shiva will not take sanyas, but will preach asat shastra as a Brahmin. It should be noted that Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu was also eka-dandi sanyasin, while Vaishnava sanyasins are tri-dandi sanysins. This means that either Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, a great Krishna Bhakta and an avatar of Bhakti, actually did not accused Adi Shankara and Advaita but were later interpolations by lesser evolved disciples. Even Jiva goswami and Chaitanya Mahaprabhu considered Sridhara Swami, who was a Rama Bhakta and an Advaitain as an authority on spiritual matters and his commentary on Srimad BhAgavatam should be revered by all.

It shows the meaninglessness of the words of the holy texts (shruti):

The great doctrine resembling the purport of the Vedas, (but) non-Vedic:

This is completely opposite to that taught by Sri Adi Shankara. As far as teaching brahma-vidya is concerned, Shruti, Smriti and Manudharma (smriti) teach us to renounce vedic rituals. Vedic rituals are done so that a person becomes fit to realise Brahman. Hence a sanyAsin renounces the very activity with the help of which he gained inner purity.

By the study of the Veda, by vows, by burnt oblations, by (the recitation of) sacred texts, by the (acquisition of the) threefold sacred science, by offering (to the gods, Rishis, and manes), by (the procreation of) sons, ***by the great sacrifices, and by (Srauta) rites this (human) body is made fit for (union with) Brahman*** *- Manu Smriti 2.28*

Adi Shankara in his sutra-bhAsya says, "PasvAdibhiscAviswsat' It means, "Human beings and animals have the same urges. They eat and sleep and copulate and, besides, the feelings of fear are common to both. What, then, is the difference between the two? it is adherence to dharma that distinguishes human beings from animals. Without dharma to guide him man would be no better than an animal. Bhagavan in Gita says the same thing. Adi Shankara revered veda-s as supreme authority. Paramacharya, Shri Chandrashekharendra Saraswati of Kanchi Kamakoti peetham, says that , Acharya (Adi Shankara) has commanded us to hold on to our old dharmic traditions and keep them alive.

It is noteworthy that an Advaitin SAyanAchArya with help from his brother VidyAraNya Swami has written full commentary on all 5 veda-s (with Krishna and Shukla Yajurveda as two). No other acharya of any sampradAya has accomplish this feat. Both eastern and western scholars uninanimously agree that SAyanAchArya's commentary is the most authentic.

It is a well known fact that our shastra-s are extant because of Adi Shankaracharya. How can a man, who is responsible for bringing back the vedic dharma and reviving the tradition alive be accused of teaching *asat* shastra? It

is unfortunate that Vaishnava-s and other non-advaitins do not give him his due credit.

In this (doctrine) only the giving up of one's own duties is expounded. And that is said to be religiousness by those who have fallen from all duties.

Adi Shankara in his Gita BhASya teaches us not to leave our svadharma. This is reflected in his commentary on verses 3.35, 4.13, 18.41 - 46,48 which talk about varNa dharma.

Lets talk them in brief w.r.t. Shankara BhASya

BG: 3.35: Doing svadharma, though done defectively is superior (sreyas) than performing another's (another varNa's) in a better way. Even death is better while engaged in sva-dharma, as compared to remaining alive while engaging in another (varNa's) duty. BG 4.13 & 18.41: (Essence): varNa is by guNa, but guNa is inherited by birth.

BG 18.42-45 talk about duties of 4 varNa-s

BG18.46: A human being achieves success, merely in the form of the ability for steadfastness in Knowledge; by adoring, worshipping svakarmana, with his own duties stated above, as allotted to each caste

BG 18.48: O son of Kunti one should not give up the karma, duty to which one is born, which devolves from the very birth even though it be faulty,

VarNa by birth is also supported by Manusmriti. See verses 87-100 in Chapter 1. Also note that Sri RAmAnuja, Sridhara Swami, Keshav Kashmiri of Kumar VAishnav (NimbArkAcharya) also speak the same.

We will take another verse from Gita:

Bhagavan in Gita BG 18.66 says

सर्वधर्मान्परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं व्रज।
अहं त्वा सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुचः।।18.66।।

sarvadharmānparityajya māmēkaṅ śaraṇaṅ vraja.
ahaṅ tvā sarvapāpēbhyō mōkṣayiṣyāmi mā śucaḥ..18.66..

18.66 Abandoning all forms of rites and duties, go to my refuge alone. I shall free you from all sins. (Therefore) do not grieve.

Adi Shankara in his Gita BhASya says,

18.66 Sarva-dharman, all forms of rites and duties: **Here the word dharma (righteousness) includes adharma (unrighteousness) as well**; for, what is intended is total renunciation of all actions, as is enjoined in Vedic and Smrti texts like, 'One who

has not desisted from bad actions' (Ka. 1.2.24), 'Give up religions and irreligion' (Mbh. Sa. 329.40), etc.

In Taittiriya Bhasya, our acharya explains the importance of duties in Taittiriya Upanishad 1/11.

In simple words, TAi. Up. 1/11 Shankara BhaSya says, that Follow and practice Truth, follow dharma, do your duties properly. Just by performing vedic rites once, do not consider that karma kand is over for you. Keep doing karma kand and keep following smriti-s which are moral and ethical codes for harmonious living. Practice non-violence, speak truth, speak without hypocrisy, do not have a motive to harm others.

Let us take a little excerpt form Tai. Up. 1//11 BhaSya by Adi Shankara and his disciple SureSavarAcArya.

Sloka begins with - 'वेदमनूत्व्याचार्योऽन्तेवासिनमनुशास्ति' –

Vedamanoochyãchãryo'ntevãsinamanushãsti' – 'The teacher instructs the students who have completed their study of the Vedas' (Taittireeya Upanishad: 1/11). **He instructs them, 'सत्यं वद। धर्मं चर। स्वाध्यायान् मा प्रमदः।' 'Satyam vada; dharmam chara;** ...

Shankara Bhasya of Tai. Up. 1/11 with commentaries by Sureshvara and sayana (vidyaraNya) says

Duties briefly stated.

2, Speak the true. Follow Dharma.

Speak the true: give utterance to what them comest to know by proper evidence and what is worthy of utterance. And thou shalt follow Dharma, too. 'Dharma' here stands for duty in general, inasmuch as the several duties, such as truth-speaking, are particularized below.

The wise who know all Dharma lay down that truth - speaking consists in giving utterance to a thing as it is perceived, without hypocrisy or a motive to do injury.

The wise say that Dharma consists in the observance of Agnihotra and other works. (S).

Truth-speaking stands also for other virtues mentioned along with it, such as "harmlessness, truth, the abstaining from theft," etc.* 'Dharma' means Agnihotra and other sacrificial rites enjoined in the extant srutis. Jaimini has defined it thus; " Dharma is the thing taught in (the word of) command (Veda)"t Thus the two comprehensive sentences teach that all duties enjoined in the sruti and the smriti should be observed.

Duties never to be neglected.

On the principle that " Once done, the command of the scriptures has been observed,"

one may suppose that after a single performance of the works enjoined in the sruti and the smriti they may be abandoned. To prevent this supposition the sruti commands as follows …

For full commentary, refer his bhasya.

source: refer page 178

References from Gita and Tai. Up. Bhasyas clearly shows that Adi Shankara did not teach anything non-vedic or against dharma.

Is Advaita Non-Vedic?

Now let us try to understand that Advaita is vedic or not. Several quotes from Shastra-s both Smriti and Shruti are mentioned in next section Advaita in Shastras. **Apart from this, earlier in Understanding Advaita, it was explained that Advaita is the only Vedantic branch which accepts full shruti and veda-s. It is also well known that Advaita accepts all 6 pramANa-s of KumArila BhaTTa school of pUrva mimAmsA.** Vaishnava-s do not accept that Shiva is a Supreme God and Shaivas do not accept Krishna as Supreme God. Vaishnavas even go as far as downgrading the Status of Shiva as just a demi-god and in this claim they quote some verses from BhAgavatam and the quote from Gita in which Bhagavan talks about 'anya-devata'. They forget that all 18 purANa-s were written by Bhagavan Ved Vyas who is an avatar according to Bhagavatam. They also do not accept the verses from Bhagavatam and other purANa-s like pamda purANa, kurma purANa, Brahma purANa which says that there is no difference between Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva (Rudra). This means direct insult to Bhagavan veda vyas. If Bhagavan Ved Vyas has written 18 purANa-s then there must be some purpose behind them. Rejecting them on the basis of categorization (sattvik, rajasic and tamasic), as done in Padma Purana is nothign but childish. No Acharya is above Bhagavan Veda Vyas. It should also be noted that it was Bhagavan Veda Vyas who blessed Adi Shankara and extend his life for 16 more years to uproot adharma and teach the correct Shastra.

Rudra is mentioned in veda-s as veda-purusha, but Vaishnava-s do not accept it. Same is the case with Shaivas. They do not accept Vishnu or NArAyaNa as Ved-purusha. Shaktas believe that only Adi Shakti is supreme and all incarnation including Krishna and Rama come under Adi Shakti. Advaita is the only vedantic school which accepts all forms of God as supreme and gives equal status to them. It says they are all manifestations of NirguNa Brahman. Ishvara is not mAyA, but mAyApati i.e. controller of mAyA.

Advaita do not consider vedic rituals and Vedanta as opposite to each other, but considers them an important step for inner purification. Advaita also do not discard dvaita and idol worship. Advaita considers it as an important step for inner purification. Advaita only teaches that having divine vision of God is not the final state. It is Nirvikalp SAmAdhi. This is in accordance to Shruti and Smriti which teaches Brahma-vidya. Unlike other schools, Advaita correctly teaches that Brahman is supreme. Taittiriya Upanishad 2.1.1 says *satyam, Jnanam Anantam Brahma*. Adi Shankara in his bhasya teaches us that it is a definition of Brahman (*brahmanah lakshanaartah vakyam)*

Sri Ramanuja in Gita 13.13 interprets Brahman as individual soul, while Adi Shankara interprets Brahman in this verse as it should be - Supreme Brahman. It is unknown to me if Brahman is ever defined as Individual soul in Upanishads.

After careful studying of Shatra-s, it will be clear that it is only Advaita, as taught by our Acharya which fully complies with shruti and smriti. Advaita, and the teaching style of Adi Shankara is not of his own but is passed on to Adi Shankara by Guru-Shishya parampara. Acharya's method of teaching, adhyAropa apavAda, is the only traditional consistent method.

Acceptance of all six pramanas of Mimamsa

Unlike other non-advaita schools, Advaita accepts all 6 pramANa-s as prescribed by mimAmsA of KumArila Bhatta. The six pramANa-s are

"pratyaksa", "anumana", "upamana", "sabda" "arthapatti" and "anupalabdhi".

Ramanuja's qualified non-dualism accepts only three- pratyaksa, anumana and the Veda (sabda)

We need all types of Knowledge

Paramacharya says,

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We must make good use of our brain and mind. Indeed, we must make them sharp
as if by frequent honing so that they will help us in finding the truth. Why
did Sankara master all the sastras, all the arts, all the sciences, Sankara
who thought the world was Maya? Why did he ascend the "sarvajna-pita" (seat
of omniscience)?

I said Nyaya was also known as Tarka, "Anviksiki". We learn from the Sankara-
Vijaya that the Acarya mastered Nyaya or Anviksiki, Kapila Maharsi's
"Kapilam"     (Sankhya),     Patanjali's     Yoga-sastra     ("Patanjalam"),
Kumarilabhatta's Mimamsa ("Bhatta-sastra").

Anviksikyaiksi tantre paracitiratula

Kapile kapi lebhe

Pitam Patanjalambhah paramapi viditam
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Bhatta ghattartha-tattvam

Advaita embraces even those sastras that apparently do not speak about it. That is why I am speaking about all such sastras though I am called "Sankaracarya". Non-dualism inheres dualism, qualified non-dualism, Saivism, Vaisnavism and so on. It enfolds even those systems that are critical of it. Advaita does not state that other systems are totally false. If it opposes them it is only to the extent needed to counter their argument against itself. It concedes them the place they deserve.

Further Paramacharya says

The purpose of exalting a particular deity over the another is not to depreciate the latter. The underlying idea is that a person who worships his chosen god has unflinching faith in him and becomes totally devoted to him. Such exclusive devotion is called "ananyabhakti". The idea here, however, is not to regard other devatas as inferior to one's own chosen deity- an example of **"nahi ninda nyaya".**

source

Last message of Adi Shankara BhagavadpAda

Last Message or parting instructions of any saint is considered as extremely important. Adi Shankara at the request of his disciples gave instructions in 5 stanzas to his beloved disciples which are called as SopAna Panchakam or Updesha Panchakam

The first verse says

वेदो नित्यमधीयतां तदुदितं कर्म स्वनुष्ठीयतां

तेनेशस्य विधीयतां अपचितिः काम्ये मतिस्त्यज्यताम् ।

पापौघः परिधूयतां भवसुखे दोषोऽनुसन्धीयतां

आत्मेच्छा व्यवसीयतां निजगृहात्तूर्णं विनिर्गम्यताम् ॥ १ ॥

Study the Veda every day; do properly the karma prescribed therein; through that (act), worship the Lord; give up the thought of doing an act with desire (for its fruit); shake off the group of sinful deeds; consider (mentally) the defect in worldly pleasure; strive for the desire (for the knowledge) of the Átmán (Self); get out of your home without delay.

From the above analysis, it can be safely concluded that neither our acharya Sri Adi Shankara nor his Advaita is non-vedic.

Adi Shankara - A Jagadguru

<content Shifted to a New Page - Adi Sankara - A Jagadguru>

Another Accusation on our acharya is that - Adi Shankara became Vaishnava during his last years.

Some also accuse Adi Shankara that though he was spreading Asat Shastra, in the end of his life, he become a Vaishnava and composed Bhaja Govindam. Bhaja Govindam was not his last composition. They miss the purpose and incident that let to spontaneous creation of beautiful hymm. Bhaja Govindam stress on surrender to the Lotus feet of Lord and on VairAgya (dispassion). This means that Adi Shankara was not against sAkAra upAsanA.

The first and the last composition of Adi Shankara is a proof that he taught Advaita from the beginning to end, yet he did not defamed or denigrated other paths. According to Swami Sacchidananadendra Sarasvati, Advaita was the only school which was extant during Adi Shankara Bhagavadpada's time. All schools agree on union of Jiva with Brahman as final release. They only differed in their approaches, which lead to same truth. Swamiji has written extensively in his work Shuddha Shankara Prakriya Bhaskara booklet Series.

First composition was Dasa sloki, which talks about Advaita. It shows the method of Neti-Neti. Madhusudana Saraswati wrote an extensive commentary called 'Siddhanta Bindu'. Last composition, Upadesa Panchakam. is also of Advaitic nature, giving step by step instructions from following injunctions of Veda-s to Self Realization.

Fourth verse of Dasasloki says

न साख्यं न शैवं न तत्पाञ्चरात्रं
न जैनं न मीमांसकादेर्मतं वा
विशिष्टानुभूत्या विशुद्धात्मकत्वात्
तदेकोऽवशिष्टः शिवः केवलोऽहम् ॥४॥

There is no Sankhya nor Saiva, nor that Pancharatra [1] nor Jaina. The conception of the Mimamsaka and others does not exist. For, through the direct realisation of what is qualified, the Self is known as of the nature of the Absolutely Pure. The One, the Residue, the Auspicious, that Alone, am I. (4) Source

[1] Ramajuna and Madhva say that they follow PanchrAtra Vaishnavism

Second verse of Upadesha Panchakam is

saN^gaH satsu vidhIyataaM bhagavato bhaktirdR^iDhaa.a.adhIyataam.h .

shaantyaadiH parichIyataaM dR^iDhataraM karmaashu santyajyataam.h .

sadvidvaanupasR^ipyataaM pratidinaM tatpaadukaa sevyataam.h .

brahmaikaaxaramarthyataaM shrutishirovaakyaM samaakarNyataam.h ..

Form association with good; entertain firm devotion for the Lord; practise Ùánti (calmness of mind) and so on; give up at once the fast-binding karma (action); approach the good, wise person (for knowledge); serve (worship) his sandal (feet) every day; **seek (from him knowledge of Brahman, symbolized by the single Syllable (Om); listen to the Vedánta-vakya dealing with Brahman.**

Last verse of Upadesha Panchakam is

ekaante sukhamaasyataaM paratare chetaH samaadhIyataam.h .
puurNaatmaa susamIxyataaM jagadidaM tadbaadhitaM dR^ishyataam.h .
praakkarma pravilaapyataaM chitibalaannaapyuttaraiH shliShyataam.h .
praarabdhaM tviha bhujyataamatha parabrahmaatmanaa sthIyataam.h ..

Sit comfortably in a lonely (quiet) place; fix the mind on the Higher (Supreme) Self; seek the full (all-pervading) Átman within; consider this Universe as sublated by it; melt away (destroy) the effect of karma already done by dint of discriminating knowledge; get detached from future actions; go through the effect of karma which you have begun to experience here; finally remain (peacefully) in the exalted state of the Supreme Self (Para-brahman).

OM represents NirAkAra, NirguNa Brahman. No where in the first or last composition, our acharya tends to preach Vaishnava bhakti, specially in the form that we see today.

We can conclude that our beloved acharya never became Vaishnava.

BrihadAraNyaka upanishad says jIva is destroyed

vidyAraNya svAmI in panchdaSI 8.36 cites Br. Up. 2.4.12 and 4.5.13 by saying that yaGYAvAlkya taught to maitrI that jIva is destroyed after GYAna.

II-iv-12: As a lump of salt dropped into water dissolves with (its component) water, and no one is able to pick it up, but from wheresoever one takes it, it tastes salt, even so, my dear, this great, endless, infinite Reality is but Pure Intelligence. **(The Self) comes out (as a separate entity) from these elements, and (this separateness) is destroyed with them. After attaining (this oneness) it has no more (individual) consciousness.** This is what I say, my dear. So said Yajnavalkya.

IV-v-13: As a lump of salt is without interior or exterior, entire, and purely saline in taste, even so is the Self without interior or exterior, entire, and Pure Intelligence alone. **(The Self) comes out (as a separate entity) from these elements, and (this separateness) is destroyed with them. After attaining (this oneness) it has no more (individual) consciousness.** This is what I say, my dear. So said Yajnavalkya.

Sankara bhASya on above verses is worth reading for more clarity. Adi Sankara says that Parabrahman by association with panch-mahAbhUta comes to be known as jIva. jIva is like reflection of sun and moon is seen in water, similarly reflection (AbhAsa) of Brahman is known as jIva. When water is removed, the reflection vanishes and what remains is un-touched supreme brahman.

Shiva Gita, a part of Padma Purana teaches advaita, says jIva is destroyed

For more details, please visit here.

Sri Abhinava Nrisimha Bharati has written a wonderful Sanskrit commentary on Shiva Gita. Sri Sri Paramasivendra Saraswati II, Guru of Sadashiva Brahmendra wrote a commentary on Shiva Gita

Shiva Gita is referred by Sadashiva Brahmendra of Kanchi Kamakoti Math.

Source

Chapter 10 teaches Jiva Brahma Aikya. It says that Jiva is destroyed in 10.37, 10.38. Vaishnavas believe that Jiva is not destroyed even after liberation.

Sanskrit Sloka:

ततत्कर्मानुसारेण जाग्रभ्दोगोपलब्धये ।
इदं लिग्ङशरीराख्यमामोक्षान्न निवर्तते ॥ ३७ ॥

Hindi Translation:

अपने किये उन कर्मो के अनुसार जाग्रतादि अवस्था में सुख-दुःख का साक्षात्कार जीव करता रहता है । सम्पूर्ण वृत्ति लिंगशरीर से उठती है । जब तक मोक्ष न हो, लिंगशरीर का नाश नहीं होता ।

English Translation:

According to the karma done in waking consciousness, one experiences pleasure and pain. all vrriti-s (thoughts arising in mind) arise due to ling sarira (jiva / subtle body). Until moksha is not achieved, linga sarira is not destroyed. (Shiva Gita 10.37)

Sanskrit Sloka:

आत्मज्ञानेन नष्टेनऽस्मिन्साविद्ये सशरीरके ।
आत्मस्वरुपावस्थानं मुक्तिरित्यभिधीयते ॥ ३८ ॥

Hindi Translation:

जिस समय ज्ञान द्वारा जीव और ब्रह्म का भेद मिट जायेगा और अविद्या सहित इस लिंगशरीर का नाश हो जायेगा उस समय केवल आत्मा का अनुभव मात्र 'अहं ब्रह्मास्मि' इस स्वरूप में स्थिर होने से ही मुक्त होता है ।

English Translation:

Moment when, due to Jnana, the difference between Jiva and Brahman will be removed and avidya (ignorance) including ling sharira will be destroyed. At that time there will be the experience of only Atman in the form of 'I am Brahman' will be stabilized. Due to stabilizing or staying in this experience, one become mukta (free). (Shiva Gita 10.38)

Note: Definition of Ling Sarira is given in Shiva Gita 10.15, 10.16 and 10.17

Sanskrit Sloka:

नानाविध्यासमायुक्तो जीवत्वेन वसाम्यहम् ।
पच्चकर्मेन्द्रियाण्येव पच्च ज्ञानेन्द्रियाणि च ।
मनोबुद्धिरहंकारश्चित्त वेति चतुष्टयम् ॥ १५ ॥

वयवः पच्च मिलिता यंति लिङ्गशरीरताम् (लिग्ङशरीरताम्) ।
तत्राविध्यारिकमायुक्तं चैतन्यं प्रतिबिम्बितम् ॥ १६ ॥

व्यावहारिकजीवस्तु क्षेत्रज्ञः पुरूषोऽपि च ॥ १७ ॥

Hindi Translation:

अनेक प्रकार की अविध्या के साश्रय होकर जीवरूप से भी मैं ही निवास करता हूँ । पाँच कर्मेन्द्रियाँ और पाँच ज्ञानेन्द्रियाँ, मन, बुद्धि, अहंकार, चित्त इनका चतुष्टय और पाँच प्राण यह सब मिलकर लिंग शरीर को उत्पन्न करते हैं । उसी लिंग शारीर में अविद्ध्यायुक्त यह चैतन्य का प्रतिबिम्ब पड़ता है, उसी को व्यवहार में 'जीव', 'क्षेत्रज्ञ' और 'पुरूष' करते हैं ।

English Translation:

Taking aadhaara (support) of Different types of avidya (ignorance), only I reside in Jiva-rUpa

OR

Associating with different types of ignorance, only I (Bhagavan Shiva) reside in Jiva-rUpa.

5 karmendriya-s (parts of action) and
5 jnanendriya-s (5 senses of knowledge),
Collection of 4 - mind, intellect, ego, chitta and
5 prana (vital air)

- Locus of all the above rise rise to ling sharira.

in this ling sharira, due to adivya (ignorance), there is a reflection of this chaitanya (consciousness).

This in relative terms is called as 'Jiva', 'Kshetragya' and 'Purusha'.
Also note that Here the word vyavahAra (व्यवहार) is used. Here vyavahAra means 'in practical reality'.

This also indicates that there are true truth, Relative truth and absolute truth. Relative truth is not eternal.

Pre Shankara Advaitins

Vaishnavas and dvaitins also accuse that ajaata vaada was adapted from nAgArjuna, a famous buddhist.

Pre shankara Advaitins are Rajarshi Janak, his Gurus, Shri sulabhA (maid servent), Rishi Yajnavalkya and Rishi Ashtavakra and his disciple Rishi Sukadev (son of Ved Vyasa)Sri Krishna in Gita says live like Janak (BG: 3:30).

To understand Janak, you will have to know the philosophy of Janak, which can be known by reading Ashtavakra Gita, which is based on Ajaata vaada, which is spoken from the grave of karma.

CAUTION: DO NOT READ ASHTAVAKRA GITA. It is not for masses.

You cannot ignore Janak, as he was chosen by Maa Sita as her father. He was also spared by Lord Parshurama, even though he was a kshatriya and was also given Shiva's bow.

You also cannot ignore the teachings of Yog-Vasistha, as VasisTa was Rama's guru, and is also one of the sapta-rishis. Yog vasistha talks about Advaita, which is not worship of personal God.

Both Rama and Krushna accepted Guru. So Guru must have capacity to teach avatars and so their teachings cannot be ignored. Rama's guru was Brahmarshi VasisTa and Krishna's Guru was sAndipanI. Infact Yog-Vasistha, which talks about advaita nd ajaata vaada,

starts with the request of MAharshi Valmiki and Brahmarshi VishvAmitra who requested Brahmanshi VasisTa to teach a varAgi disciple (Rama), Tatva Jnana, as he was fit for it.

So if advaita is mayavad, then all of these advaita teachers were mayavadis and so taught wrong things to both Rama and Krushna.

For the follower of Sri Ramakrishna and Sri Ramana Maharshi, both practiced Advaita and reached highest goal. So the question that Advaita is not vedic and authentic is out of question.

Brahmarshi Vasista is Bhagavan Brahmaji's mAnasa purtra (mind born son), and so existed with the beginning of this world. So were 4 kumars, who were tatva jnanis. nArada asks his brother Sanat kumar who taught him Tatva Jnana (advaita). All are Bhagavan Brahma ji's sons so Brahma ji is also a tatva jnani. So is Bhagavan Shiva, who is a pratik (symbol) of Jnana, the one without beginning. Bhagavan Vishnu is the sustainer of this universe and so he is beyond the realms of Maya. The trimurty represents the very essence of Tatva Jnana.

Advaita and ajAta vAda has been there since the beginning of this world. Brahman can stay without maya, even after dissolution of this world, Brahman, the un-destructive, beyond time and space, untouched by creation, preservation and dissolution, in the purest form will stay on.

ajAta vAda will never be popular and laymen will never understand it. Both advaita and ajAta vAda are not for laymen. They are for pure minds. For more details please visit is Advaita for everybody?

In Sutra Bhasya, Adi Shankara mentions names of teachers prior to him like Brahmanandin, Dravidacharya (different from Dramidacharya which Ramanuja mentions) and Upavarshacharya.

Further according to Madhaviya Digvijay, Gaupadacharya is disciple of Sukhacharya (sukh dev), the one who has narrated puranas to sages, who is the disciple of Bhagavan Veda Vyas, who authored both Puranas and Brahmasutra. Adi Shankaracharya has commented from Brahmasutras according to the knowledge passed from Bhagavan Veda Vyas.

Shankaracharya is accused as hidden-Buddhist.

Lord Buddha is glorified as an avatar of Lord Vishnu in Srimad Bhagavat Purana. If you consider Lord Buddha as an avatar of Lord Vishnu, then he could not go against our Vedas and Vedanta. It is also well known that Sidhartha studied Hindu Shastras, meditated and went on till the extreme before he found the 'middle path'. It is evident that Buddha was well versed with sanskrit and vedas. Hence sanskrit words could well be used by him and his disciples. Both Hindus and Buddhists have studied each others shastras in-depth so that they could refute them. It is possible that both use each others way of expression

freely to convey the message, and talk in the language of their time. Infact buddha chose to teach in the local language (mostly Pali) and not in Sanskrit as Sanskrit was not day-2-day language. So Lord Buddha and their disciples may have used both local and sanskrit words to convey their message. In return Hindus, in order to explain people influenced by buddhists would have also explained using buddhists terms. Technically, words used by Buddhist are that of indian origin. So using them would not do any harm.

Another Point is that Lord Buddha had himself declared that his teachings will not last more than 500 years. Hence, during Gaudpadcharya, Govindacharya and Shankaracharya's time, actual teachings of Lord Buddha must not have been sustained. Buddhist and Advaita Vedanta philosophy have much in common. So rather than accusing Shankara as hidden Buddhist, we can say that Naga-Arjuna was a hidden-Advaitin, as by that time also original teachings of Buddhism would have perished.

We do not have all and full accounts of debates of Shankaracharya. Not all is documented. So we cannot say how he refuted jains, buddhists, dvaitins, vaishnavas, ritualists (mimamsis), shaktas, kapaalikaas, shaivas, chaarvaakas, etc. Quoting from commentaries is not good enough, as in commentaries you will find that it is concentrated on the verse. Only if that verse is wrongly explained, then a saint will make an attempt to clarify and refute false argument.

Further, before refuting one has to study in-depth the philosophy, like Kumaril Bhatt studied buddhism. Before thorough study, one should refrain making wrong statements. It's all human ego that accuses. Bhakta does not waste time in nonsense, as he is only concerned with his God. There is an incidence in the life of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu where he transformed 2 dreadfull sinners into bhaktas. He could have accused them and could have made people against them, but he did not do such a thing. Do you think such a noble personality will accuse Adi Shankara. Infact not much has been written by Chaitanya Mahaprabhu himself including his charitramruta. Surely it is the human hand, as avatars cannot behave in such a way. Anyone on the pada while addressing the crowd will always be descend in action and speech. Do you still think that Chaitanya Mahaprabhu or Madhva had actually accused the way it is told today with rubbish translations. Logical contradiction is fine, but it is always polite. True Saints will never feel lower emotions like hatred and will accuse others. They only feel compassion. Further, English translations make mess or even mockery. I have seen in one commentary of Bhaja Govindam in which 'mUDha' is translated as foolish, rascal, idiot, etc.

An acharya is considered as a strong logician if s/he can use the same logic, same ideoms, same examples to explain vedAnta and find fault in the explanation of opponents Gaudapadacharya, Adi Sankaracharya, Ramanujacharya, MadhvAchArya all did the same. That is why they commented on the same verse but from different point of view and in this process refuting the logic and point of view of other school of thought.

GauDapAda is accused as hidden-Buddhist

Even Sri GauDapAda, Great Guru, Guru of Shankaracharya's Guru GovindpAda is being accused to be a hidden buddhist. Word like NirvaNa are also found in shastras. NirvAna PrakaraNa is the 6th chapter of Yog-Yasistha. Buddha is found in many places meaning baudho or baudhyo (know), buddha means the awakened. 'alAta shAnti PrakaraNa' is the forth prakaraNa. The word alAta is used by buddhists. alAtacakra is a peculiarly buddhist one. The alAtacakra is a burning firebrand that is waved in a circle, creating an impression of a continuous circle of fire. It is interesting to note here that gauDapAda characteristically inverts the use of the buddhist metaphor. The buddhist uses the metaphor to insist that the impression of a continuous circle is an illusion, there being nothing more than the momentary spatial positions of the burning brand. Hence, from the buddhist prespective, it is plainly an error to see the burning circle as having any svabhAva - "own-nature". gauDapAda on the other hand points out that the burning brand is itself the substratum of its momentary spatial positions and the illusion of a burning circle caused by waving the brand. Hence, according to him, even if the burning circle is an illusion, its svabhAva is nothing other than that of the burning brand. Source. Also note that the word 'alAta' circle is used in MaitraiNi Upanishads (4-24). Another example of 'magical elephant' is accused to be adapted form Buddhist. But it can be adapted from Shri Bhashe played as a drama, covering famous or popular incidents in the life of King udayana also has these words. *(Source: Swami Chinmayananda's commentary of Shri gauDapadAchArya's karika on MANdukya Upanishad, alAta SAnti prakaraNa)*

GauDapAda took the very example of buddhist monks, who, actually took our siddhanta and examples to convey their philosophy, was correctly put forward. Even if some words are purely of Buddhist origins, GauDaPada took the some example to point the error in interpretation and to project it correctly from vedic standpoint. This is not being hidden-buddhist. Even if you thin that the words are purely of buddhist origin, to use enemies weapon (example or draSTAnta, logic and grammar) to hit back at them is very effective method to prove your point. This in no way makes you a hidden-buddhist, but in turn glorify you of being a true vedantin who took the very example, which was strongly embedded in the minds of common people and point out the logical and grammatical error in them.

One the other hand, if the logical conclusion of any monk is true, then that has to be accepted. It is mark of humility. If the concept does not clash or dis-approve Vedantic concept, when why will anyone refute it? ajaata vaada is age old tradition, so ajaata vaada is not not refuted, but it is projected correctly from vedic standpoint. Again, this does not make you Hidden-Buddhist.

The very purpose of great saints and avatars is to sustain and propagate Vedanta.

There are two types of teachings

1. Keeping srotA (listeners) in center
2. Keeping truth in center

1. keeping listeners in center

When you want to explain to laymen, one should come down to their level, talk and explain them in a way they understand. This is the reason why Lord Buddha preferred to preach in local language pAlI (paali). Hence our acharyas explain fro practical standpoint. they try to explain concepts in day-2-day language using day-2-day words connecting them to our shastras. Here, care is been taken that SrotA (listener) should understand the concept. If the concept is not clear fro m direct translation of a verse, an example (draSTAnta) is given. If one example is not enough, another is given. Later on same thing is repeated in another way and may be using another example, so that concept is refreshed, all for the good of listeners and devotees.

In Bhagavad Gita, Arjuna asks same question again in different ways like which is better Jnana or karma yog, sanyasi or yogi, etc. Bhagavan patiently listens to Arjuns doubts and then peacefully replies to all the doubts. This goes on upto chapter 18 when Arjuna becomes Self Realized. Gita starts with a mohandha (dhrutraShTa), who is blind, symbolizing blinded by emotions, me and mineness. So he asks, what have, my children and pAndu putra have done. pAndu putras are sons of his younger brother Pandu i.e. Pandavas. So here is I nad mineness. Last verse by Arjuna is naSTo moha, smrutir landhA, meaning that my moha is destroyed and I have got back my knowledge i.e. know my true nature (Atman / Brahman). Arjun represent disciples and Krishna is an AdarSa Guru.

2. Keeping truth in center

In this type of pravachana or upadesha, the truth is kept in center and not the disciple. Earlier, Guru came down to the level of disciple. Here, Guru talks from his standpoint, expecting disciple to raise to his level. those who can understand can grasp the meaning, while those who cannot can stay confused. Hence this type of teaching is not for the masses. Truth is expounded in naked form and not everyone can digest it.

ashTAvakra gItA is one such dialog in which truth is kept in center. Infact, after the first chapter, there is hardly any upadesha is given. ti is the masti (ananda) of two tatva Jnanis. Janak was instantly realized after giving upadesha, as Janak listened without any doubt or fear or objection. All that was being said by his guru aShTAvakra was directly absorbed by the mature disciple. Hence in second chapter, he became realized.

Krishna is the best guru, but even bhagavan could not get such a disciple like Janak. The best disciple is rAjA janak.

gauDapAda, Adi shankara and other acharyas were first type of gurus and so they took the very own words and concepts of buddhists to refuge their philosophy.

What matters is the intention. The fact remains that Shri gauDapdAcharya, Shri GovindpadAcharya and Shri Adi ShankarAchArya, all remained stuck with one

point, Atman is not Shunya. They all were hardcore Advaita Vedantins. Vedanta was flowing through their veins.

Two types of Granths and Commentaries are created

Commentaries or any shastras, granthas are written from two points

1. To give clarity of Vedantic concepts
2. To refute any objections raised upon Vedanta

Commentaries on Upanishads are generally not of second type, though at places an acharya may clarify the correct meaning of a verse, which was being targeted by opponents. But not the whole commentary is written to prove any point.

The second type of grantha take up the the issues and objections and refutes them. Classic example 'Advaita Siddhi' by Shri Madhusudan Saraswati is the celebrated work refuting Shri Vyastirth's logical objection to Advaita Vedanta,

Dogmatic sects take the commentaries of first type, contain very few clarifications / refutations from buddhist philosophy say conclude that there was no objection from Shri gauDapAda or from Shri Shankara. Adi Shankara walked length and breath of India, and had many many verbal duels. The arguments, objections and their refutations are not at all documented. Only a select few remain. If everything was documented, it would fills thousands of pages.

Adi Shankara's teachings are not consistent.

This is often the logical conclusion that non-advaitins make which at times even advaitins find it difficult to give satisfactory answer.

Adi Shankara did not formulated his own teaching style that which ever existed prior to him. Infact Adi Shankara followed a unique teaching method which was passed down to him via Guru-Shishya paramparA (guru -Disciple tradition).

The unique method of Teaching, as taught by wise men and Jnani-s representing Traditional System of Teaching is called by Adi Shankara as 'adhyAropa apavAda' meaning False Superimposition followed by Retraction. This method can also be found in Shri GauDapadAcharya's KArikA on Mandukya Upanishad.

This method of teaching was rediscovered and propagated by Swami Sacchidanandendta Saraswati.

A separate Page has been dedicated to explain this method. Please visit adhyAropa apavAda - A Consistent Traditional Teaching.

Once this method is understood, all doubts about inconsistency will be uprooted.

Shankara was Dogmatic & Sectarian

Such persons have not read Shankara charitramrita. If time permits I will try to write something about it in future. I will try to explain in brief.

Devotional Works by Adi Shankara

Shankara is also well known for propounding a system of bhakti (selfless devotion) and composing several bhajans (devotional songs), which he believed brought one closer to God. Some of his well-known bhajans are Bhaja Govindam, Saundaryalahari and Śivānandalahari. Infact he has written more hymms and stotras than any other acharya, that too in a very short life span of 32 years.

Advaita parampara starts with NarayaNa as first guru

nArAyaNam. padmabhuvam. vasishTham. Saktim. ca tatputra parASaram. Ca

vyAsam. Sukam. gauDapadam. mahAntam. govindayogIndram athAsya Sishyam. |

SrI Sam.karAcAryam athAsya padmapAdam. ca hastAmalakam. ca Sishyam.

tam. toTakam. vArttikakAramanyAn asmad gurUn santatamAnatosmi ||

nArAyaNa
padmabhuva (brahmA)
vasishTha
Sakti
parASara
vyAsa
Suka
gauDapAda
govinda bhagavatpAda
SankarAcArya
padmapAda, hastAmalaka, toTaka, sureSvara (vArttikAra), and others (anyA:).

Advaita paramparaa starts with NarAyaNa as their Adi Guru. This clearly shows that Adi Shankara did not try to defame NaaraayaaNa. Adi Shankara also did not defame idol worship, infact he repaired many temples including jaganathpuri. the second verse says that Shiva (sadASiva) is the first Guru.

sadASiva samArambhAm. SankarAcArya madhyamAm.
asmadAcArya paryantAm. vande guru paramparAm. ||

"We salute the lineage of masters starting with Sada-Shiva, with Shankaracharya in the middle and my own guru at present."

Source

Not Afraid to write about praises to VAsudeva

If you have read Shankara bhasya on Gita, Adi Shankara has many times mentioned the word Vasudeva (vishnu) in his bhasya (commentary) in the verse like one who has surrendered (e.g. 7:14, source: http://202.3.77.102/acquia/?q=node/22).

Adi shankara proudly writes the name vasudeva / vishnu in his Gita bahsya.

Humility of Adi Shankaraa

In commentary on Hastamalaka hymm, Adi Shankara refers to Hastamaka as an acharya, eventhough he was his disciple. This shows his humility. Taking to dust of feet of Chandala is also a sign of humility.

Harmonizing all paths - Smartism

Smarta dharma is an e.g. of an attempt to harmonize all paths.

Sri Sankara Bhagavatpada taught us the truth that all the deities we hereditarily worship are but the manifestations of the One supreme Paramaatma. He established the worship of the moorthies of Siva, Vishnu, Ambika, Surya and Vinayaka all sanctified in the Vedas, and each having a specific Gayatri Mantra. South Indian hav added and Subrahmanya making it six deities of worship. Some replace any one God, mostly Surya deva with and Subrahmanya. Subramanya or Kartikeya also has specific Gayatri mantra. If worshipped with devotion. all of them will enable us to attain the paramaatma, proclaimed by the Vedas as Sat Purusha, or Brahman. In that way he established the practical interpretation of the Gita teaching. Yo yo yaam Yaam tanum bhaktah

sraddhaya architum icchati;
Tasya tasyaachalaam shraddhaam
Taam eva vidadhaamyaham

and came to be known as Shanmatasthaa-panaacharya. He traveled in all the 56 kingdoms of this country, where the Vedas were prevalent, and proclaimed the Advaitic principle of Oneness of God. Like the same God who is within us and within everything we perceive, the seer, the seen and the seeing (drashta, drisyam and drishti) are all aspects of the same paramaatma. One Deity is the main deity of worship and is kept in center, rest are kept in sides. Other deities help devotee to reach the supreme. This attempt looks to harmonize all paths and bring unity among all Hindus.

Extracted from http://www.kamakoti.org/souv/1-1.html

Ved Vyas extending life of Shankara for 16 more years

Like Vaishnavas strongly believe in Chaitanya and so in chaitanya-charitramrita, so do we believe in authenticity of Shankara charitramrita and it says that Ved Vyasa (krishna dvaipayana) after having intense debate for 3-4 days was very satisfied with Adi Shankara and blessed him to live for futher 16 years. The very request by Shankara to Ved Vyasa to end in life here and now shows that he was not interested in being victorious.

source: http://www.kamakotimandali.com/advaita/advaita_index.html

It was Adi Shankara who is credited of reviving our dharma and vedic texts. He could have altered the mool slokas, but he did not alter them. It was he who wrote all shastras. We have Gita and other shastras because of Adi Shankaracharya. No one can take away this credit from him.

Adi Shankara Never Rejected Dvaita

Adi shankara never rejected dvaita philosophy, but in fact he considered it important for purification of mind. His hymms, and compositions to various deities is the proof. Swami Chinmaya, in his book, on Shankara's Jivan charita, mentions 108 works.

A website dedicated to Kanchi Kamkoti Peetham has also a list of Shri Adi Shankara works here.

In Shri Shankara Digvijay by MAdhava VidyAraNya swAmI, in 6th Sarga sloka 41 says,

दास्स्तेऽहं देहदृष्ट्याऽस्मि शम्भो जातस्तेंऽशो जीवदृष्ट्या त्रिदृष्टे ।
सर्वस्याऽऽत्मन्नात्मदृष्ट्या त्वमेवेत्येवं मे धीर्निश्चिता सर्वशास्त्रैः ॥ ६ - ४१ ॥

O Shambho ! from SarIra-bhava i.e. from standpoint of physical body, I am your servant, in that manner, O Trilochana (Lord Shiva) ! from Jiva-bhava I am your part (Ansh) and you are my anshi (whole). O the Atman of the whole jagat (Universe) ! from Atma-bhava,

I am not different from you (abhinna, a-bhinna, bhinna = different). In this way, my intellect decides (is determined), in view of all shastras

In simple words:

1. From Sarira Bhava, I am servant of Lord Shiva
2. From Jiva-Bhava, I am part (ansh) and you are whole (anshi)
3. From Atma Bhava, I am not different from you.

Same is said by Sri Ramakrishna when he gives an e.g. of Lord Hanuman

Once Sri Rama asked Hanuman, how do you see me? Hanuman replied,

1. From Sarira Bhava, I am servant of thy.
2. From Jiva-Bhava, I am part (ansh) and you are whole (anshi)
3. From Atma Bhava (Jnana drisTi), I am not different from you., You are I are one.

Advaita is not in conflict with anyone and fights with no one

Even Gaudpada did not reject dvaita or wished to refute any other faith. Same is said by a great vedantin and devotee of Sri Ramana Maharshi Dr. T.M.P. Mahadevan. Shri S. N. Shastri in Intro to Vedanta says:

> Dr. T.M.P.Mahadevan, the great Vedantic scholar, says in his book `Ramana Maharshi and His Philosophy of Existence'- "We believe that Advaita is not a sectarian doctrine. It is the culmination of all doctrines, the crown of all views. Though other views may imagine themselves to be opposed to Advaita, Advaita is opposed to none.
>
> **As Gaudapada**, a pre-Sankara teacher of Advaita, says, Advaita has no quarrel with any system of philosophy. While the pluralistic world-views may be in conflict with one another, Advaita is not opposed to any of them. It recognises the measure of truth that there is in each of them; but only, that truth is not the whole. Hostility arises out of partial vision. When the whole truth is realised, there can be no hostility. (Mandukya Karika, III. 17 & 18; IV. 5)".

Source

In words of Paramacharya, from the book, Acharya's Call, chapter Advaita Vedanta

> Though other systems quarrel with Advaita, Advaita has no quarrel with any.

Paramacharya further adds

According to Shri Adi Sankara, no school of thought is foreign to Advaita. In the scheme of the path to realise Adviataanubhava, every system contributes an essential step and so Shri Sankara used the truths of each of them and pressed them into his service. By its very name, Advaita negates duality and dissension and comprehends every warring sect and system into its all-embracing unit. In fact, the survival of Hinduism is itself due to this Advaitic temper, which sees no distinction between Saivam, Vaishnavam and other denominations. Shri Adi Sankara underlined the essential unity of all Sampradaayas and sects and saved Hinduism from disruption. All denominations have the common Vedic basis. By bringing to our minds all the great Acharyas, we can acquire that peaceful frame of mind and develop that catholic temper and universal accommodation characteristic of Shri Adi Sankara and of the Advaita Vedanta he expounded, which will enable us to live in peace and amity, so essential for securing universal welfare.

Even the current Shankaracharya Matt have temples and perform daily worship. Here is a explanation from website dedicated to Shrengeri Matt.

Establishing 4 maths in the four quadrants of our country

Establishing 4 maths in the four quadrants of our country, opening temples, organizing halls of education, this mighty master left nothing undone in maintaining what he achieved. Among the four Maths two of them in the East and West were set up on the sea shore, while the Maths in the North and South were set up in the mountain regions. Sri Sureshwaracharya, who hailed from the north was placed in charge of the Math in the South, while Totaka from the South was sent to Badri in the North. He made it mandatory that the Nampootiris from Kerla should perform Pooja at Badri, while the Brahmins from Karnataka were assigned for Nepal. Likewise He ordained Maharashtra Brahmins to do Pujas at Rameshwaram. This shows what a broadmind He had when it came to leadership in matters of national interest.

Adi Shankara's message in a nutshell

The message that is contained in elaborate discussions in the Bhashyas of Sri Shankara is often succinctly expressed in a century of verses, in ten verses, in one verse or even half a verse. He has reconciled the seemingly contradictory conclusions of the Upanishads and in the integrated view that He has presented the eternal, impersonal, consciousness Absolute is the Brahman, the one without a second. By His power which is inscrutable (अनिर्वचनीया) and called maya, or mitya, He appears as the universe, conditions by space, Time, etc., that are ever changing. The jiva is not different from the absolute Brahman, but due to Upadhis appears to be different and subject to limitations. The Upadhis limit comprehensions and are unreal like limitless space appearing like room space, pot space, etc…

Once the conditioning factors vanish, jiva is seen as one with Brahman as taught in the Mahavakya of the Upanishads. The Knowledge of this oneness is liberation or moksha. Karma and Bhakti help from a distance in the attainment of Jnana by bestowing the needed mental purity when done in a spirit of dedication to Iswara.

In His Bhashya on the topic of meditation, Sri Shankara clearly differentiates the qualification between "seeking to scale yoga's peak " and "having scaled the same". He maintains that one who has ascended the yoga has to simply maintain this equipoise, i.e. till chitta shuddhi is ripe enough to maintain the meditational equipoise, karma has to be done by all in nishkama spirit as a dedication to God.

He has also declared in many places that even the obligatory works done in Nishkama spirit have punya as the fruit. He said that any karma done, having been dedicated to God may not bear fruit is improper, indeed such dedication should make work non-fruitful besides bestowing the required mental purity. He Uses the word "फलसंकल्पस्य चित्तविक्षेपहेतुत्वात्",- in this Geeta Bhashya i.e. mental clinging to the fruits of actions distracts. Therefore any doer of actions who has given up mental clinging to the fruits is a yogin, his mind concentrated, not being distracted. Hence Karma Must not be neglected.

Though Brahman alone is Absolute Truth (Paramarthika), the knowledge of the objective universe - erroneous form the highest stand point - can still be considered as a relative kind of truth for worldly transactions e.g., a mud pot, though a mud, can still be retained for keeping the water in it.

Every one of the several schools which developed in the past Shankara age, bears the influence of Sri Shankara's teachings in one form or other. His message boils down to the formula - natural growth, assimilating what is compatible and `co-existence' with what is incompatible.

Why Temples are needed if God is omnipresent?

This doubt arises in some people. God is omnipresent - this is the Truth. God is everywhere, God exists in every particle - this is the Truth. Please visit this link for explanation.

Also please refer to this link for further understanding.

Introducing Chapter of 13 Gita, Madhusudan Saraswati in his Gita Bhasya, GuDhArtha DIpika, says

ध्यनाभ्यासनवशीकृतेन मनसा तन्निर्गुणं निष्क्रियं ज्योतिः किंचनं योगिनो यदि परं पश्यन्ति पश्यन्तु ते | अस्माकं तु तदेव लोचनचमत्काराय भूयाच्चिरं कालिन्दीपुलिनोदरे किमपि यन्नीलं महो धावति ||

dhyanaabhyaasanavashiikR^itena manasaa tannirguNaM nishhkriyaM jyotiH kiMchanaM yogino yadi paraM pashyanti pashyantu te | asmaakaM tu tadeva locanachamatkaaraaya bhuuyaachchiraM kaalindiipulinodare kimapi yanniilaM maho dhaavati ||

If the yogis, with their minds which have been brought under control through the practise of meditation, see some such transcendental light that is without qualities and action, let them see!

But, for filling our eyes with astonishment, let there be forever that indescribable Blue (Light) alone which runs about hither and thither on the sands of the kaaLindi (Yamuna)!

Source

This shows that Advaitins are not against Dvaita and Krishna Bhakti.

People who do not understand Advaita, stick to the famous sloka - Brahma Satyam Jagat MithyA. For this we will have to look from a top down perspective. Also it is to be noted that upadesha-s are given from Adhikara bheda, as explained in the answer given in response of creating temples.

There are different vAda-s and different bhAva-s and laxaNas which have to be considered for better understanding of the subject.

Four vAda-s are

1. Arambha vAda:

God is the kartA and he created this universe. Like potter creating pot. Nyaya-vaisheshikA adopt this vAda.

This vAda is for the ones who believe in karma and cannot believe that God does not do any karma. They believe that without karma nothing is possible.

2. pariNAma vAda

In this something changes into something else. The change is visible and real.

e.g. is milk turning into curd.

sAnkhya Adopt this vAda. They say that Sun which does not do any work but under it's influence we find transformations like water vaporizing into steam, plants growing, etc.

It is for subtle intellect. VisisTadvaita and dvaita adopted this vAda.

3. Vivarta vAda

This vAda is adopted by Adi Shankara to explain the concept of mAyA as mithyA.

e.g. snake-rope. Snake does not exist but is super imposed on rope. Without rope there is no snake. As one sees rope, snake vanishes without any trace. If it was real, the transformation would have left traces e.g. cloth burned in fire reduces to ash, which is permanent, real and inconvertible back into cloth.

As the mind is purified, one is taken a step further, more closer to reality. sAdhaka keeps moksha as the only goal in life and meditate on supreme brahman, thereby uprooting all other desires except one - I want moksha.

4. ajAta vAda

Non existence of MAyA and so this world. Only Sat-Chit-Ananda Atman exists - Pure Non-duality experience.

This path is for the ones who are eligible for Self Realization i.e. they have all desires up-rooted except the one - I want moksha. Now this desire also has to be dropped. AshTAvakra Gita talks about this vAda. If bandhan (bondage) is brahti (illusion), then moksha is mahA-brAnti (great illusion).

To make him quit this last desire questions are asked to sAdhAka:

1. Who wants moksha?
2. Who is the one who meditates?
3. Who am I?

If I am Sat-Chit-Ananda then I do not need to sit in meditation and then establish myself in samadhi. Now the effort drops and one becomes free from last desire of moksha. sAdhaka enters into samadhi without making any effort spontaneously (sahaj). that is why it is said that Jnana cannot be obtained by karma, without Jnana there is no mukti (liberation), liberation is here and now (as there is no time lag after one realizes - Who

Am I - after the enquiry, one enters into non-dual state and seeking ends here and now - immediately and not after some seconds, minutes or years).

One can become detached with this world and withdraw senses and become and observer, but not enter into samadhi, as one is still observing. hence it is said to drop the process of observation,

GauDapadAcharya adopted this vAda.

The great e.g. is Lord Buddha. He got enlightened when he dropped everything. Please note that he is called as buddha - the enlightened. Bodh means Jnana and not void or zero state. One cannot negate existence of oneself.

But for laymen, this is not possible. So now **we move from Top to Bottom**

Since one cannot stay in atma sthiti, one has to make effort to realize. The make effort one has to meditate. To know how to meditate and to know the real nature or it's qualities or a way to reach one has to take AdhAra of Shastras and a Self Realized Guru. But one cannot stay detached for 24 hours so the concept of mAyA and this world as mithya is brought. The concept of PratibhAsika satya is created for satisfying the doubts.

Still some may not be able to detach themselves and withdraw 5 senses.Such a person cannot believe that this world is illusion and feels that everything is real. Hence the concept of vyavahArika satya is created. sAkAra bhakti is preached for mental purity. For those who would doubt that why Self Realized Saints suffer from illness and bad circumstances, a concept of prArabhdha is created to satisfy them.

All this is created to temporarily calm the mind and purify the mind. Upon maturity, old gross concepts are replaced by new subtle concepts. Gita says that Jnangni sarva karmaNi bhasmasAta krute tatha, meaning that fire of wisdom burns (up roots) all karma. All means prArabhdha, AgAmi and sanchit. All includes prArabhdha. Earlier disciple was convinced that prArabhdha is like arrow that has left it's bow. Now it cannot be stopped and will hit the target with full force. Saints ma not have done any pApa karma in this life. But they are suffering due to their pApa karma in past life (lives).

Some people cannot believe that one can stay in a-kartA bhavA. So niSkAma-karma is prescribed.

There are 3 types of disciples, muDha, madhyam and uttam adhikAri. Upadesha-s are given according to mental purity and ability to grasp and understand subtle concepts. All is done with intention to rise above until one reaches last stage.

All the different means by which people can attain knowledge of the self should be understood to be valid. These means are unlimited in number

Madhusudan Saraswati in Siddhanta Bindu says:

81. Thus, everywhere in Vedanta, when there are such contradictions, this is the answer. **The Vartikakara (Sureshvaracharya / Vartika-kara) says: "All the different means by which people can attain knowledge of the self should be understood to be valid. These means are unlimited in number".**

Note by Shri S. N. Shastri: Different Acharyas have expressed different views about how the mahavakaya is to be understood. The followers of Sureshvara

say that jahallakshana is to be adopted. The followers of Sarvajnatmamuni and Vachaspatimisra adopt ajahallakshana. Dharmaraja Adhvarindra, the author of Vedantaparibhasha interprets the vakya without resort to lakshana. But there is no difference as far as the ultimate import of the vakya is concerned. All agree that the vakya declares the identity of the jiva and Brahman. So all these methods of interpretation are acceptable.

Source

Sureshvaracharya specifically says about this in Br.Up.bhAshyavArtikA- ""All the different means by which people can attain knowledge of the self should be understood to be valid. These means are unlimited in number". (1.4.402).

Source 1 and Source 2

Other Sources: Meaning of Mahavakya - Tat Tvam Asi and Brahman cannot be described by any word whatsoever

Vivarta vAda is explained by Paramacharya, Sri Sri Chandrashekhara (Indira) Saraswati, 68th Shankaracharya of Kanchi Kamakoti peetha says in his book Hindu Dharma chapter - Cause of Creation

Note here 'our acharya' means Adi Shankara

"Causes" or "karanas" are divided into two categories: "nimitta" and "upadana". You need earth or clay as a material to make a pot. So earth is the upadana for the pot. But how does it become a pot? Does it become a pot by itself? It has to be shaped by a potter. So the potter is the cause- he is the nimitta. (The "nimitta" we spoke about in jyotisa is different.

Nyaya and Vaisesika believe that Isvara created the universe with the ultimate particles called "anu-s". Here Isvara is the nimitta-karana and the "anu-s" are the upadana-karana. To shape the clay into a pot a potter is needed. Without him there is no earthen pot, or in other words, the pot without the potter is non-existent. So when he shapes it out of clay he is the cause and the pot the effect. This is called "arambha-vada" or "asat-karya-vada". "Sat" means that which exists (the real) and "asat" that which does not. There is no pot in mere clay. The non-existent pot is produced from the clay. It is in similar fashion that Isvara created the universe with the "anu-s" - what he created did not exist in the particles. This is the doctrine of Nyaya.

Adherents of Sankhya, as we know, do not believe in an Isvara. According to them Prakrti itself exfoliated into the universe. Such a belief is not to be

mistaken for the contemporary athestic view. I say so because Sankhya also postulates a Purusa who is jnana, similar to the Nirguna-Brahman. According to it the inert Prakrti can function in such an orderly fashion only in the presence of Purusa. The presence of Purusa is the cause but he is not directly involved in creation. Crops grow on their own in the sunshine. Water dries up, clothes become dry and it is all because of the sun. Does the sun worry about which crop is to be grown or which pond is to be dried up? Your hand becomes numb when you hold a lump of ice in it. Is it right to reason that it is the intention of ice to benumb your hand? Similar is the case with Purusa for he is not attached to creation. But with the power received from him, Prakrti creates the world out of itself. There is no Isvara as a nimitta-karana. According to Sankhya, Prakrti has transformed itself as the created world. This is called "parinama-vada".

While asat-karya-vada is the principle on which the naiyayikas base their view of creation, supporters of Sankhya base their theory on sat-karya-vada. Adherents of the former believe that the clay is the upadana(material cause) for the making of the non-existent pot while the potter is the nimitta or efficient cause. The sat-karya-vadins belonging to Sankhya argue thus: "The pot was there in the clay in the beggining itself. The oil-monger presses the sesame seeds to extract the oil that is already present in them. Similarly, the pot concealed in the clay emerged as a result of the work of the potter. It is only by using the clay that you can make the pot. You cannot make a pot with sesame seeds nor do you get oil by pressing the clay. The pots are all anu-s of the clay; they came into existence by the anu-s being shaped.

"Our acarya says: "There is neither arambha-vada nor parinama-vada here. It is the Brahman, with its power of Maya, that appears in the disguise of creation. For the potter who is the Paramatman there is no other entity other than himself called clay. So the arambha-vada is not right. To say that Paramatman transformed himself into the cosmos is like saying that the milk turns into curd. The curd is not the same as the milk. Would it not be wrong to state that the Paramatman became non-existent after becoming the cosmos? So the parinama-vada is also not valid. On the one hand, the Paramatman remains pure jnana, as nothing but awareness, and, on the other, he shows himself through the power of his Maya as all this universe with its living-beings and its inert objects. It is all the appearence of the same Reality, the Reality in various disguises. If a man dons a disguise he does not become another man. Similar is the case with all these disguises, all this jugglary of the universe. with all the apparent diversity, the one Reality remains unchanged. " This argument is known as "vivarta-vada".

There is vivarta in the phenomenon of a rope appearing to be a snake. The upadana-karana(material cause) that is the rope does not change into a snake by nimitta-karana(efficient cause). So the arambha-vada does not apply here. The rope does not transform itself into a snake; but on account of our nescience (avidya) it seems to us to be a snake. Similarly, on account of our ajnana or avidya the Brahman too seems to us as this world and such a vast plurality of entities.

Nyaya lays the steps by which we may go further to realise the truth on which our Acarya has shed light.

Nyaya and Vaisesika teach us how we may become aware of padarthas (categories) through reasoning and become detatched from them to realise "apavarga" in which there is neither sorrow nor joy. But they do not take us to a higher realm. Dualism also has it's limitations thus. To grasp the One Reality that is non-dual and realise inwardly that we too are that Reality is to experience absolute liberation.

It must be said as one of the distinctive features of Nyaya that it inspires us to go in quest of apavarga by creating discontent in in our worldly existence. Another of its distinguishing features is that it employs all its resources of reasoning to contend against the doctrines of the Buddhists, the Sankhyas and Carvakas to establish the principle of Isvara as Karta(Creator).

Shankaracharya only wanted us to rise above dvaita.

Adi Shankara used Vivarta Vada, where any duality is due to the error in perception. If Brahman is unchanging, as said by shrutis, then it cannot change into anything else i.e. jagat and Jiva. Even In Gita Lord says, I live in everybody's heart (18:61), hence duality is ruled out. Even PariNamam vAda is ruled out as nothing is a result of something. e.g. milk turning into curd. It is just error in perception.

ईश्वरः सर्वभूतानां हृद्देशेऽर्जुन तिष्ठति।
भ्रामयन्सर्वभूतानि यन्त्रारूढानि मायया।।18.61।।

18.61 **The Lord dwells in the hearts of all beings**, O Arjuna, causing all beings, by His illusive power, to revolve as if mounted on a machine.

अविभक्तं च भूतेषु विभक्तमिव च स्थितम्।
भूतभर्तृ च तज्ज्ञेयं ग्रसिष्णु प्रभविष्णु च।।13.17।।

13.17 And the Knowable, **though undivided, appears to be existing as divided in all beings**, and It is the sustainer of all beings as also the devourer and originator.

or

13.17 **And undivided, yet it exists as if divided in beings**; It is to be known as the supporter of being; It devours and It generates.

In this verse, Bhavana Krishna, AS Brahman / Atman) is undivided. If it divides, then this statement is refuted or becomes false. Hence when Bhagavan says by his yog-maya or maya, he means by the illusionary power of maya. Hence actually there is no second personality i.e. Jiva created.

In Parinam vada milk turns into curd and is different though it is made up of milk. So here there is final product that is different from milk.

In Vivarta Vada, snake disappears after the rope is seen. No trace of snake is found. The substratum i.e. Atman as rope is only present. It is only due ot the error in perception that one sees snake. It is nothing but illusion.

But for a beginner, all students live in dvaita, hence at times Adi Shankara explains concepts that help one rise above dvaita. Initially it is said that no one can live without karma, then later on it is said that Jnanagni (fire of wisdom) destroys all karma. All means Prarabhdha, sanchit and agami. Hence even prarabhdha is destroyed. But beginners may raise doubts about why saints and realized souls suffer from dis-ease. So a concept of prarabhdha is derived (Refer: VC 452). The intention is the calm the mind so that one can advance in spirituality and later on destroy all karmas. For mature student such question do not arise at all.

Some more accusations are

If you walk of Advaita path you will lose all your rasa and Ananda.

Adi Shankara BhagavadpAda in Vivek Chudamani, 227 describes Brahma as full of rasa.

सत्यं ज्ञानमनन्तं ब्रह्म विशुद्धं परं स्वतः सिद्धम् ।
नित्यानंदैकरस प्रत्यगभिन्नं निरन्तरं जयति ॥ २२७ ॥

Brahma is satya (truth), Jnana svarUpa, ananta (infinite), viSuddha (pure), shresTha (best) and svataH siddha (self evident) , nitya (eternal), **ananadrUpa (full of Bliss), full of rasa,** inseparable from antarAtmA, nirantara (continuous), and makes one victorious.

Brahman is ananda rUpa or ananda svarUpa is given at various places in Vivek Chudamani. e.g. 225, 301, 306, etc

ब्रह्मभिन्नत्वविज्ञानं भवमोक्षस्य कारणम् ।
येनाद्वितीयमानन्दं ब्रह्म संपद्यते बुधैः ॥ २२५ ॥

The Jnana, 'Brahman is not different from me', is a tool (sAdhana) of freeing from bondage, with the help of which Jnani-s obtain / achieve advitiya (second-less), anandrUpa (full of Bliss) Brahman.

Brahman is also said to be full of peace. One attaining Brahman rests in peace or becomes peaceful. (Since there is no duality, there is no activity, there is no sorrow, hence there is peace and bliss.

Finally, followers of Adi Shankara are accused as "Tyrannical people who burned down monasteries, destroyed cattle and killed women and children"

Such an accusation is completely out of sheer jealousy, ignorance and intolerance.

After Understanding Advaita and Meditative Journey of an Advaita Vedantin, one can easily understand that Advaitin are peace loving people.

Cause of any kind of hostility (emotionally charged behaviour) is due to attachment with any object, person or due to likes and dis-likes (rAga and dveSa). Advaitins are taught to be neutral to likes and dislikes. PrakaraNa Granth like Tatva Bodh and Vivek Chudamani explains qualifications required to learn advaita. One of the ShaTasampatti (6 virtues) is titkSA,titikshA means to be neutral to likes and dislikes and remain calm in good (anukuLa) and bad (pratikuLa) situations. Any person sincerely meditating i.e. doing japa will know that mind calms down after chanting God's name be it Rama, Krishna or OM. Less the number of desires more is the peace. Vivek Chudamani says destruction of desires is nothing but liberation. When renunciation is one of the pre-requisites of learning advaita, who can one think of doing such a heinous crime. It is unimaginable. Advatins are peace loving as peace the true nature and very tolerant and of non-sectarian belief respecting all systems of Vedanta. Infact as stated above Adi Shankara was prophet of love, peace, harmony and establisher of Vedic Dharma. He not only preached advaita, but also preached bhakti, shakti upasana (tattra and Yog sadhanA). Yes Adi Shankara was a maser of Mantra sAdhaNa and in Sri Vidya, which was passed down to him by his revered Guru GovindpadAcharya ji, who himself was a mater of these vidya-s. Adi Shankara focused more one advaita, but did not reject any path and discarded them as non-vedic.

Advaita Jnana needs no Bhakti

This is a common assumption that Non-Advaitins believe. As explained above, Advaita does acknowledge bhakti. I will directly quote Paramacharya's words from the book, Acharya's Call.

Chapter: Advaita Vedanta

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It is worthy of note that whatever their mutual differences may be, all
thinkers belonging to schools other than Advaita, are one in their attack on
Sri Adi Sankara's views. This should be regarded as a tribute paid by them
to Sri Sankara Bhagavatpada. Each of them singled out Advaita, as expounded
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by Sri Acharya, as the only system worthy of taking notice of for the purpose of criticising. According to Advaita, the ultimate bliss is the experience of non-difference between the Jivatma and the Paramatma. Acharyas of other schools of thought would wish to have at least a tract of distinction between the two so that the Jivatma, standing apart, may be able to enjoy the realisation of the Paramatma. Thus the difference between the several systems of Hindu religious thought is slight, as all are agreed upon the ultimate realisation of the Supreme. But when it comes to a question of expounding each system, this difference got magnified to the point of violent opposition. And yet we find that in their ultimate reaches, all of them speak the language of Advaita. This shows that the expansive heart of Sri Adi Sankara accommodated all views of the ultimate reality and all approaches to it. Though other systems quarrel with Advaita, Advaita has no quarrel with any.

The catholicity of Advaita is also evident from the fact that pronounced Advaitins like Vachaspati Misra, who lived about one thousand years ago, Vidyaranya and Appayya Dikshitar wrote encyclopedic works on other systems with the fidelity of exposition rarely equaled and much less excelled by the protagonists of those systems themselves. Appayya Dikshitar says that as God's grace is required to reach the Ultimate Reality, and as that grace can be obtained only through Bhakti, he was expounding the other systems which promoted this Isvara-bhakti.

Chapter: Importance of Bhakti

But mere intellectual comprohension of it is not enough. It must be realised as a fact in one's own experience. For such realisation grace of God is a pre-requisite. Isvaraanugrahaadeva Pumsaam Advaita Vaasana. We begin with a feeling of distinctness from God. The predicament of worship is one of duality of Deity and Devotee. But even then the devotee does not feel that God is external to him and to the Universe; He has the consciousness that God is imminent in himself and in every particle of the world, in-dwelling every where and in everything, how ever minute. Our duty is worship Him in this way with devotion, and if we do so, He reveals His true nature to us. Bhagavan says :

BHAKTYAA MAM ABHIJANAATI YAAVAAN YASCHAAMI TATVATAH

The word, BHAKTYAA, meaning through devotion, shows that bhakthi is the means for the realisation of the truth of God's nature. Advaita, Visishtadvaita, and Dvaita are one in this emphasis on Bhakti to obtain God's grace. To whatever school we belong, we should invoke that grace through Bhakti, leaving it to Him to reavel the truth of His nature. All Achaaryas have stressed this need for Bhakti.

Advaita, Visishtadvaita, and Dvaita are one in the emphasis on Bhakti to obtain God's grace.

In advaita, we have to surrender to Guru and to the words of the Guru. We have to stay in duality i.e. as a servant in front of a Guru. Brahman is indescribable, but the path to reach it can be taught. To teach one needs someone who has experienced Brahman. Guru is the one who has realized Brahman and hence the disciple must always approach him with reverence as a servant.

Svetasvatara Upanishad says (6.23)

6.23: These truths, when taught, shine forth only in that high-souled one who has supreme devotion to God, and an equal degree of devotion to the spiritual teacher. They shine forth in that high-souled one only.

Guru Gita has many verses in support of this

Therefore discarding all kinds of contacts with people, by all possible means, giving up all conflicts of the scriptures; one should take refuge in the Guru. (103)

On the advice of the Guru, if one meditates with firm determination on the principle of "I am one without duality" need not resort to forest for penances, and the constant practice of the above principle brings about samadhi and his sins are burnt instantaneously. (94 & 95)

Katha Upanishads says

1.2.9 This knowledge is not attainable by logical reasoning. It is of easy comprehension only when instructed by another. O! Dearest one! O! Nachiketa! let there be seekers like you! You are truly resolved in your desire.

Acharya while explaining this verse (Ka. Up. 1.2.9) uses the word 'abheda-darshi AcArya' meaning - a Guru who know the non-dual Atman. Here Darshan is taken as 'to know' and not 'to see'. In other words, Self Realized Guru.

Acharya explains that - This Atman cannot be known by 'tarka'. Tarka means inference, logical reasoning or thought process, nor it can be learned from an Acharya who is well versed in shastra-s ...

Ka. Up. 1.2.16 says that - this Om is Brahman, this Om is Param, the one who wishes to know OM, becomes Brahman.

This verse instructs one to Meditate on om with a firm conviction or wish or one and only goal to know 'Brahman'.

Atman cannot be realized without the grace of Atman.

1.2.23 By study of the scriptures, lecturing one's own intellectual enquiries or by wide learning or listening, this Atman cannot be realised. Whomsoever, it chooses alone, is attainable that realisation about It, as It reveals Its own nature to him.

Guru is the one who is one with Ishvara.

Our acharya comments on Ka. Up. 1.2.23 as

This Atman is not realized (prApta) by pravachan (discourse) meaning This Atman is not realized by accepting many [statements of] veda-s, nor it can be intellectually meaning nor it can be known with the power of retention of various grantha-s (shastra-s), nor it can be achieved [realized] just by attentively listening to discourses (sravaNa). Then how can it be achieved [realized]? for this they say -

A sAdhaka who prays Atman, achieves (realizes) the very Atman by itself i.e. because of the (grace of) Atman, one knows Atman 'this Atman is like this'

If one asks - How one realizes Atman?, they say - For that AtmakAmi (the one who wishes to know Atman), the Atman reveals it's pArmArthika svarUpa (Absolute, true nature) i.e. Atman reveals it's own pure nature as it is (in true sense)

Note: *Words in square brackets are that of author.*

This is clear that Student is surrendered to Guru and Prays to Atma Tatva,

One has to meditate on Atman with abheda bhakti i.e. with a feeling that 'I am not different from Atman / Brahman', as per instruction of Guru.

To understand further lets have a brief understanding of difference between buddhism and advaita vedanta.

Difference between Buddhism and Advaita

From my limited knowledge, difference between buddhism and advaita is that advaita accepts brahman as substratum of entire universe while buddhism does not. Other than that there are many thoughts similar and common to both.

Adi Sankara in his Chandogya up. bhAShya 6.2.1 says

asattvamAtrAbhyupagamo api ayukta eva, abhyupagantuH anabhyupagamAnupapatteH

And their admission of mere non-existence is also illogical because the existence of the person who denies existence, cannot be denied.

Sri Ramakrishna says that there is no difference between (original) teachings of Lord Buddha and Advaita. But the original teachings have only been sustained upto 500 years after Buddha's samadhi.

Sri Ramana Maharshi in his 40 verses on reality has refuted the zero state.

12. That alone is true Knowledge which is neither knowledge nor ignorance. What is known is not true Knowledge. Since the Self shines with nothing else to know or to make known, It alone is Knowledge. It is not a void (zero state, sunya).

This is confirmed in Ribhu Gita which is quoted later on.

So if someone is talking that, 'According to Advaita, Brahman is nirguna (without any qualities). But logically speaking, something that is without any attributes whatsoever is as good as nothing (sunya)', you do not take him / her seriously.

You simply cannot negate your own existence.

Infact, since Buddha was an avatar of Lord Vishnu, the zero, from Advaita angle would be the non-existence of mAyA and not the negation of Self (Brahman). After that there is only maun. So buddha did not answer when one asked to him if there is existence of God. In this state, there is no duality and no expression (except maun) can explain it. So by taking maun, which is the only expression capable of expressing Atma-sthiti, Buddha, in practice, taught conveyed the meaning. Also in this state, which is the very essence of vedas, there is no need to accept any vedas, as one has already achieved what vedas want us to achieve.

But VAishnavas, look to vedanta from buddhist view, while it should be opposite, as a person in whom vedas flows in his veins can only look through an eye of vedas. A true vedanting will say that Buddhist teachings are like Advaita and not the opposite. It is our vedanta that is older and eternal. Buddhism was born with Lord Buddha and already it's essence had perished after 500 years. Buddhism was invariable mixed with tantric practices.

Now, lets understand mayavad and brahmavad (mAyAvAd, maayaavad and brahmaavaada, brahmavAda)

mAyAvAda and brahmavAda

Vaishnavas believe that Vishnu (naarAyana, kruShna) is the supreme God to be worshipped and one can attain moksha only by worshipping him. Krushna is the creator of this universe and the ultimate reality.

Shaivas believe that Shiva is the supreme God to be worshipped and one can attain moksha only by worshipping him. Shiva is the creator of this universe and the ultimate reality.

Similarly, Believers of Ganesha and shaktas have same thoughts.

chArvaakas believe that lust is the reason for the creation of universe.

mayavad means any talk or belief in which maayaa is in the center and the ultimate. Maayaa is the cause of this creation.

Brahmavad means any talk or belief in which brahman is in the center and the ultimate. maayaa is the illusionary power of nirguNa brahman. Due to the power of maayaa, the world which is technically not different than brahman itself is perceived in a false way, as if it is dual with attributes. Brahman is the substratum of entire universe and the only reality. Maayaa has to be neglected and one has to rise above maayaa and it's 3 gunas to be one with Brahman or simply to be Brahman or better know and abide in True Self (BG 7:1 to 7:13).

Ultimate Advaita state does not talk about maayaa. It is called ajaata or ajaati vaada, which means not-born. Maayaa does not have the existence. But this is difficult to explain. So Adi Shankara and other pre - shankara advaita proponents introduced the concepts of maayaa.

Sri Ramana Maharshi in 40 verses on Reality says the following:

3. 'The world is real.' 'No, it, is a mere illusory appearance.' 'The world is conscious.' 'No.' 'The world is happiness.' 'No.' What's the use in arguing this way? Leave this jagat-drishti (make oneself introvert), know yourself (your True svarupa, nature), beyond advaita and dvaita, without 'I' (without ego), this sthiti (state) i.e. param sthiti (ultimate state), is agreeable to all.

Final advaita state is just maun, there is no experiencer. Classic e.g. is Lord DakshiNaamurti. So 'just be', says Sri Ramana Maharshi, be as your are, always abiding in Brahman. Brahman alone exists. Mind of Jnani is brahman says Sri Ramana Maharshi. Atman is not void, zero or sunya, it is sat-chit-anand, but you are not separate from them so as to experience them separately from you.

Practically, a matured advaita sadhaka does not think about mAyA. It is by thinking of Brahman (and not maayaa) that one becomes Brahman i.e. becomes aware that 'I' is nothing but pure consciousness (Brahman).

maya is a concept, which is only true in one state at a time, i.e either in waking or in dream. It is not present in all 3 states (waking Dream, deep sleep). So it is not real (SASvata, eternal truth or reality). The very meaning of maayaa is: yaa is 'that which is not' maa is feminine. In simple words maayaa is the one which is not there.

Infact, Advaita teaches us to neglect maayaa and rise above it. It does not give importance to maayaa

Sri Ramana Maharshi referred to Study Ribhu Gita. Please find the link here and here. Ribhu Gita, actually talk about maun, takes us beyond duality and non-duality into the realm of Brahman.

Brahman / Atman is not Shunya says Ribhu Gita, Anu Gita and Yog Vasistha

Verses from Ribhu Gita confirm that Self is not Shunya or void or zero state (slokas 11 - 22).

10. Then, addressing Nidagha, Ribhu said: I shall tell you about the definition of the Self, which is not available in all the triad of time--past, present, and future—

11. ever the most secret of the secret, by summarizing what has been expounded by Siva. There is nothing that can be talked of as non-Self, neither the mind as the non-Self, nor the world as the non-Self. Be of the certitude that there is nothing that is non-Self.

12. By the absence of all sankalpas, by the elimination of all forms, by the conviction of there being only Brahman, be of the certitude that there is not anything that is non- Self.

13. In the absence of mind, there is no thinking; in the absence of the body, there is no aging. With the conviction of there being only Brahman, be of the certitude that there is no non-Self.

14. Because of the absence of feet, there is no walking; because of the absence of hands, there is no work. There being only Brahman alone, be of the certitude that there is no non-Self.

15. Because of the absence of Brahma, the Creator, there is no world; in the absence

thereof, there is no Hari, the sustainer. There being only Brahman alone, be of the certitude that there is no non-Self.

16. In the absence of aging, there is no death; nor is there the world or the Vedas or the gods. There being only Brahman alone, be of the certitude that there is no non- Self.

17. There is no dharma (righteous conduct), no purity, no [concept of] truth, no fear. There being only Brahman alone, be of the certitude that there is no non-Self.

18. Because there is no decay, there is no movement. Because there is no decay, there is no insentience. There being only Brahman alone, be of the certitude that there is no non-Self.

19. The Guru, indeed, does not exist; truly, there is no disciple. There being only Brahman alone, be of the certitude that there is no non-Self.

20. There being nothing that is the first, there is nothing that is the second; there being no second, there is nothing as the first. If there is the concept of truth, something as nontruth will also arise.

21. If there be any concept of nontruth, a concept of truth will also arise, with it. If there is inauspiciousness, know that there is a notion of auspiciousness. Likewise, if there is auspiciousness, there will be inauspiciousness.

22. If you think of fearlessness, fear is postulated; fear is concomitant with fearlessness. There being only Brahman alone, be of the certitude that there is no non-Self.

23. If there is bondage, there is liberation; in the absence of bondage, there is no liberation. If there is death, there is birth; in the absence of birth, there is no death either.

To know what is Ribhu Gita, please visit wiki and Sivanandaonline.

Also refer to Upadesha Saram, which in 30 verses incorporates the very essence of 700 verses of Bhagavad Gita. Karma Kand is finished in just 3 verses.

Bhagavan in Anu Gita says

Seeing the self void of smell, void of taste, void of touch, void of sound, void of belongings, void of color, and unknowable, he is released. He who sees the enjoyer of the qualities, devoid of qualities, devoid of the qualities of the five elements, devoid of form, and having no cause, is released. Abandoning by the understanding all fancies bodily and mental, he gradually obtains tranquility, like fire devoid of fuel. He who is free from all impressions, free from the pairs of opposites, without belongings, and who moves among the collection of organs

with penance, he is indeed released. Then freed from all impressions, he attains to the eternal Supreme Brahman, tranquil, unmoving, constant, indestructible.

The observer is not the object. This clearly indicates that Atman is void of anything 'else' i.e. mAyA, but not void of itself.

Guru Vasistha in Yog VAsistha (Vasistha Gita) says:

Ch1:1. Salutations to that calm effulgence which is endless and unlimited by space, time etc., the pure consciousness which can be known by experience only.

Ch1:17. Even the slightest thought immerses a man in sorrow; when devoid of all thoughts he enjoys imperishable bliss.

Ch1:21. On the dissolution of the body, the ether (consciousness) limited by the heart (hridayam) alone ceases to exist. **People lament needlessly that the Self is extinct.**

Advaita is not a negative state:

Ch2:19. The bliss of a man of discrimination, who has rejected samsara and discarded all mental concepts, constantly increases.

Note:

As sadhaka progress, bliss increases. It is only in the beginning that one feels no enjoyment, as the senses are being pulled back or withdrawn. Life becomes joyless. One feels lack of interest in anything and feels insecurity. But if one jumps into this insecurity, one feels that he / she is most secured. Since advaita demands renunciation from beginning, it is not easy for beginners. Struggle decreases, as one progress and finally sadhana transforms from effort to effortless. Advaita does depends upon grace, for sadhana to become effortless. In fact everything depends upon God's and Guru's grace.

mahAvAkya - Sarvam khalu-idam brahma is bramavAda and not mAyAvAda

Adi Shankara did not stop at 'Brahman Satya, Jagat Mithya'. He went on to say 'Jagat satyam'. mAhAvAkya is 'sarvam khalu-idam brahma' Which means everything 'Else' is brahman or can be said that Everything 'Else' is (also) brahman. So if Advaita was

mAyAvAda and Adi Shankara wanted to preach a-sat-shastra, he would hav said everything else is maya. This statement would not be selected or propogated by him.It shows that Advaita is about brahmavAda and not mAyAvAda

Brahma Bhaava

नित्यं ब्रह्म निराकारं निर्गुणं बोधयेत् परम् ।
भासयन् ब्रह्मभावं च दीपो दीपान्तरं यथा ||

The Guru is one who instructs the disciple about attributeless, eternal Brahman, and there by reveals the Brahmanbhava (feeling of being Brahman) in his heart just like one lamp kindles another lamp is the Guru. (75)

Lets recollect the verse from padma purANa

This powerful doctrine of Mayavada resembles the Vedas, but is by nature non-Vedic... (Padma Purana 6.236.11)

Now you know that there is subtle difference between maavaada and brahmavaada.

It is clear that Advaita is not maayaavaad (mayavad) and advaita is brahmavaad (brahmavad). Adi Shankara did not stopped at mAyA, but went on to reach Brahman. Shankaracharya was not hidden buddhist, but a true vedantin who propagated sacred doctrine of Advaita vedanta. Infact, Advaita is the oldest tradition, surviving from the beginning of creation. Brahma dev's maanas putras (mind born sons), 4 kumaras, were also tatva Jnanis.

Importance of Guru Tatva (Atma Tatva, Brahman)

वेद्शास्त्रपुराणानि चेतिहासादिकानि च ।
मंत्रयंत्रविद्यादिनिमोहनोच्चाटनादिकम् ||

शैवशाक्तागमादिनि ह्यन्ये च बहवो मताः ।
अपभ्रंशाः समस्तानां जीवानां भ्रांतचेतसाम् ||

जपस्तपोव्रतं तीर्थं यज्ञो दानं तथैव च ।
गुरु तत्वं अविज्ञाय सर्वं व्यर्थं भवेत् प्रिये ||

The Vedas, the Shastras, Puranas, the Itihasas etc., the science of Mantras, Yantras Mohana, Uchatana etc., cults like the Shaiva, Agama, Shakta, etc., and other cults existing in the world today are merely false theories expressed in corrupted words which confuse

the ignorant and deluded Jivas. Japa austerities, observances, pilgrimage sacrifice, charity - all these become a mere waste without understanding the Guru Tattva. (19, 20, 21)

For more slokas, please visit Advaita in Shastras: Guru Gita

Another Inference is that Atman is prakash or the effluence of Jyoti of Krishna

Atman is not Prakash (light) or Jyoti (flame or point of light) or Lord's Effulgence

Bhagavad Gita says:

यथा सर्वगतं सौक्ष्म्यादाकाशं नोपलिप्यते।

सर्वत्रावस्थितो देहे तथाऽऽत्मा नोपलिप्यते।।13.33।।

Translation

13.33 As the all-pervading ether is not tainted, because of its subtlety, so the Self seated everywhere in the body is not tainted.

Shankara Bhasya

13.33 Yatha, as; sarva-gatam, the all-pervading; akasam, space;-though pervasive, still, na upalipyate, is not defiled, does not come into contact; saukmyat, because of its subtlety; tatha, similarly; atma, the Self; avasthitah, present, sarvatra, everywhere; dehe, in the body; na, is not; upalipyate, defiled.Further,

Simplified Shankara bhAsya

13.33 As the all-pervading akash (space), though pervasive, still, is not defiled, does not come into contact because of its subtlety, similarly, atma (the Self) which is present everywhere in the body is not defiled. Further,

यथा प्रकाशयत्येकः कृत्स्नं लोकमिमं रविः।

क्षेत्रं क्षेत्री तथा कृत्स्नं प्रकाशयति भारत।।13.34।।

Translation

13.34 Just as the one sun illumines the whole world, so also the Lord of the field (Supreme Self) illumines the whole field, O Arjuna.

Shankara BhAsya

13.34 Yatha, as; ekam, the one; ravih, sun; prakasayati, illumines; imam, this; krtsnam, whole; lokam, world tatha, similarly;-who?-ksetri, the Knower of the field, i.e. the supreme Self, though one; prakasayati, illumines; krtsnam, the whole; ksetram, field, from the 'great elements' to 'fortitude' (cf. 5-6).Here the illustration of the sun serves to highlight two aspects of the Self, viz that, like the sun, the Self is one in all the fields, and that It remains unaffected.This verse is meant for summarizing the idea of the whole of this chapter:

Simplified Shankara BhAsya

13.34 as one sun illumines this whole world similarly, ksetri, the Knower of the field, i.e. the supreme Self, though one, illumines the whole field, from the 'great elements' to 'fortitude'. Here the illustration of the sun serves to highlight two aspects of the Self, viz that, like the sun, the Self is one in all the fields, and that It remains unaffected. This verse is meant for summarizing the idea of the whole of this chapter:

क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञयोरेवमन्तरं ज्ञानचक्षुषा।
भूतप्रकृतिमोक्षं च ये विदुर्यान्ति ते परम्।।13.35।।

Translation

13.35 They who, by the eye of knowledge, perceive the distinction between the field and its knower and also the liberation (moksha) from the Nature of being, go to the Supreme.

Shankara BhAsya

13.35 Ye, those who; viduh, know; evam, thus, in the manner described above; jnana-caksusa, through the eye of wisdom-the eye is the realization in the form of the knowledge of the Self, which arises from following the instructions of the scriptures and teachers; through that eye of wisdom; antaram, the distinction, the particular mutual distinction; ksetra-ksetrajnayoh, beween the field and the Knower of the field as they have been explained; and bhuta-prakrti-moksam, the annihilation of the Matrix of beings-the Matrix of beings is that which is described as ignorance and is called the Unmanifest; (those who know) the annihilation (moksanam) of that Matrix of beings; te, they; yanti, reach, go to; param, the Supreme, to Brahman, the Reality which is the suprme Goal. The idea is that they do not take up a body again.

Simplified Shankra BhAsya

13.35 those who know thus, in the manner described above, through the eye of wisdom-the eye is the realization in the form of the knowledge of the Self, which arises from following the instructions of the scriptures and teachers through that eye of wisdom, the particular mutual distinction (ksetra-ksetrajnayoh), between the field and the Knower of

the field as they have been explained and the annihilation of the Matrix of beings, described as ignorance and is called the Unmanifest, (those who know) the annihilation (moksanam) of that Matrix of beings they reach the Reality, get liberation, which is the supreme Goal. The idea is that they do not take up a body again.

Ashtavakra Gita also says the same thing

18.78

kva tamah kva prakaso va

hanam kva ca na kimcana .

nirvikarasya dhirasya

niratankasya sarvada ..

Translation

For one who knows, unaltering,

beyond all trace of doubt or fear,

where is there dark? Where light? Where

giving up? Where anything at all?

Clearly the Atman is Prakashak and not prakash itself. Prakash means knowledge. It is also not lord's effulgence.

Likewise, shastras teach us, atman is AkASa-vat and not AkASa (akasha) i.e. like AkASa is omnipresent, invisible and is very subtle (sukshma) and uneffected by other 4 elements (earth, water, fire and wind) and like everything is within AkASa i.e. AkASa gives space to everything, similarly, Atman, which is subtlest, subtle than even AkASa, This comparison is to give us a visualization or create a picture or an imagination.

Atman is prakASa-svarupa. prakASa, light, has the nature of giving knowledge. Suppose you enter into dark room and want to find your wrist watch, you cannot find it in dark. By switching on tube light, you can easily find your watch. So the nature (svabhAva) of prakASa is to give knowledge.

In the snake-rope analogy, snake, which is an illusion, caused by wrong perception in dark, vanishes when one throws some light on it and it turns out to be a harmless rope. Snake was wrongly superimposed on rope. Here light symbolizes knowledge. So does in Gita say that sadhaka knows atman by Jnana ChakShu. Jnana-ChakSu is not different than Jnana i.e. Atman. Jnana-ChakSu is different than Divya Chakshu, which was given by

Bhagavan to Arjun (chapter 11) so that he can see bhagavan's virATa (cosmic, mega) svarupa (form).

Refuting authority of scripture on basis of dating and classification

Some people make ill attempt to refute authenticity of scripture if it does not fit one's ideology. Attempts to date scripture is useless as they are 'apaurusheya' (unauthored). Rishis saw the words and slokas or heard them. It is only because that they have written down or spread the teachings, they may have become famous in their name. A Rishi im[parting Brahma-vidya in any Upanishad does not mean that that particular Rishi created or authored upanishads. They only passed on to his disciple, who in turn passed on to his disciple when he assumed the role of Guru. Dating is useless for an oral tradition.

Also some sources say that some puraNas are not authentic or up-puranas and some Gita's are minor, so they are not authentic. Major or minor does not make difference. Their quality of content is what is important. Even a small samvAda (dialog) of just few slokas is equally potent and may contain the very essence of vedantic teachings. Being a minor gita or a minor purana does not take credit away from them e.g. devi-bhagavat is not one of the major 18 purANAs but is highly respected and is worshipped like that of bhagavat worshipped by vaishnavas by shaktas.

Shiva Rahasya an up-purana, which contains Ribhu Gita is considered important and revered by Shaivas. Shakras revere Devi Bhavagat though it is not one of 18 major puranas

All 108 upanishads are authentic (for an advaitin) as a great advaitin Upanishad Brahma Yogin has written commentaries on them. There are some more upanishads which are revered by a particular sect. We cannot discard them, as genuine sadhakas study them for their personal spiritual progress.

The Great VidyAraNya svAmI in his prakaraNa granth PancadaSI has cited a verse from MuktikA Upanishad 2.64

दर्शनादर्शने हित्वा स्वयं केवलरूपतः .
य आस्ते कपिशार्दूल ब्रहम स ब्रहमवित्स्वयम् .. (2.64 Muktika Upanishad, 1.4.68 PanchdaSI - dvaita viveka)

O Brahman! The one leaving both darSana (GYAna, knowledge) and adarSana (aGYAna, ignorance), abides only in Self (svarUpa), he himself is Brahman only, not just knower of Brahman.

(in other words, Knower of Brahman is Brahman itself, *Brahmavid Brahmaiva Bhavati, Mund. Up. 3.2.9*). Sri Ramana Maharshi also says the same thing. According to Swami Shankarananda of Chinmaya Mission, who has Translated PancadaSI in Hindi and have commented on it says that this verse occurs in Yog VAsisTa too.

Note: PancadaSI in English (html, pdf), Hindi (archive.org, scribd by Pt. RAmAvatAra vidyAbhAskara)

Tamil scriptures are not universally accepted and / or quoted by all Hindu schools, yet some like Thirumandiram, Thirukkural and Periya PurANa.

Lingayas do not worship according to vedas but according to their agamas.

If by referring to Purana, Adi Shankara means only one purana – Vishnu Purana, does this mean that other puranas were written after Adi Shankara?

Refuting is generally motivated by intolerance and fear of insecurity. Not accepting anything that you do not know or that contradicts your belief and philosophy may look fine, but it has to be peacefully neglected. The commentaries on Upanishads and Brahmasutra by Shri MadhvAchArya and Shri Ramanujacharya may be done due to the reason which are unknown by laymen whose whose consciousness is strongly embedded in physical body. If anyone is refuting any philosophy, I would ask, do you practice what is written in Upanishads like Mandukya, Prasna and Katha? Is it a part of daily worship or chanting of verses? Do you meditate on OM? if no then why are you so much concerned about it. Bhagavatam and Gita is enough for a laymen to progress in spirituality.

Upanishads are not for the masses. Still people pick up books, as now-a-days they are freely available. Upanishads are commented and translated by the ones who have not realized Brahman. It is mentioned in Katha Upanishad (quoted in Advaita in Shastras and in Understanding Advaita) that only knower of Brahman can impart Brahma-vidya and only a disciple who does not long for worldly desires but only longs for Brahman is only fit to study Upanishads which impart brahma-vidya. Same is same in Guru Gita, that if a guru is immature, then both Guru and disciple undergo endless sufferings. So please do not pickup any upanishad commented by a scholar or a fact finder or a historian. Only one who has realized Brahman can understand Brahman and hence can understand essence of Upanishads thereby fit to write a commentary if God orders him to do so. Same is said by Bhagavan Krishna in Bhagavad Gita. Bhagavan Krishna in Anu Gita (also known as Brahman Gita) says that he has established himself in Brahman and then imparted brahma-vidya to Arjun and now it is not possible to repeat it entirely, but I will give you knowledge through which you can attain Brahma-vidya (Anu Gita 9-15).

It is fine of 2 advaitins discuss to clear their doubts or 2 dvaitins discuss shastras to clear their doubts, but debating with other paths is not good for spiritual progress.

Have you seen any kind of debates in upanishads. It is always Q & A system. Disciple asks and Guru replies. There is no discussion, forget argument and refutation.

To add to it, commentary on Srimad Bhagavatam titled Bhavartha-dipika, by Rama Bhakta and an Advaitin Sridhara Swami was very popular and even appreciated by Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, who considered it as authentic and the best known full bhasya till date (i.e. till date of chaitanya Mahaprabhu).

In Caitanya-caritamrta, Caitanya directly speaks about Sridhara Svami, a devoted Advaitin and Sankara's follower. When a Vaisnava named Vallabha Bhatta approached Caitanya with a new Bhagavatam commentary wherein he apparently refutes Sridhara's explanations as inconsistent Caitanya become very displeased:

You have dared criticize Sridhara Svami, and you have begun your own commentary on Srimad-Bhagavatam, not accepting his authority. That is your false pride. Sridhara Svami is the spiritual master of the entire world because by his mercy we can understand Srimad-Bhagavatam. I therefore accept him as a spiritual master. Whatever you might write due to false pride, trying to surpass Sridhara Svami, would carry a contrary purport. Therefore no one would pay attention to it. One who comments on Srimad-Bhagavatam following in the footsteps of Sridhara Svami will be honored and accepted by everyone. Put forth your explanation of Srimad-Bhagavatam following in the footsteps of Sridhara Svami. (Bhaktivedanta, 1975, 63).

This shows that Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu only stressed on Krishna Bhakti and did not spread hatred against Advaitins. Such high souled person an avatar of Bhakti, cannot have negative emotions. They only put things their way. Indeed bhakti is for masses. Better learn and practice then just speaking 'I am Brahman' and not experiencing anything, not even detaching ourselves of sara-bhava. Sri Ramakrishna says that for this yuga (Kali Yuga), bhakti is the best (that suits), Naradiya Bhakti. This is general statement applicable for masses and does not say that Advaita is fake. At other times, Sri Ramakrishna says that Advaita is difficult to practice. Bhakti is the best.

There is a popular saying that, when one fills water in empty pot from river, the half filled pot makes too much of noise, while the fully filled does not. Often disciples make mess and in harming others, due to their immaturity and not reaching ultimate goal of life, they harm themselves by increasing negativity within themselves and giving bad name of their acharya. Lord buddha says, 'Anger is like holding hot coal with the intent of throwing at others'

People talking about interpolation, refutation on basis of authority, etc reflect their own mindsets. Ones wearing blue glasses can only see everything in blue colour. Person having jaundice sees yellow tinge in everything. In the same way, people talking about this stuff may actually be the ones who does such infamous deeds. Have a look at all 108 Upanishads most of them talk about Advaita and if Advaitins could manipulate upanishads or create new upanishads, that is every possibility that the ones accusing others are involved in such infamous business.

All 108 Upanishads are authentic

Non-advaitins argue or believe that only the Upanishads that are commented by Adi Shankara and Vaishnav acharyas are authentic. This is a false assumption.

If you study Sankara's texts closely, you will notice that he has a way of being concise and to the point. If the reference is to a text X, he will not quote texts Y and Z that are similar. If the reference is to a particular term or concept, he won't wander into discussions of things that are only peripherally related. He gives you the essence, without going into other things. So, if he has not referred to a text, that does not mean that he was unaware of it, nor does it mean that he did not recognize its validity. (Credits: Sri VidyAsankar ji of advaita-vedanta.org)

For an Avaitin, if an advaitin or present Shankaracharya would make a comment that 'x' upanishad is not valid even though it looks like it is of advaitic nature, then we can accept that such an upanishad has to be discarded. Again, Vaishnav panth Does Not represent the entire Hinduism. There is Shakta, Shaiva, Advaita, Tantra, Purva Mimamsa which are also according to vedas and are authentic. So all acharyas must unanimously say that 'x' upanishad is fake e.g. Allopanishad (Allah Upanishad) then we, all Hindus, can discard it.

Niralamba Upanishad is revered by Advaitins, and may not be quoted by Vaishnav acharyas, but Lahiri Mahashay has written a commentary on it. Uttara Gita is also revered by Advaitins as Shri Gaupadacharya has written commentary on it.

Same goes true for Vaishnavas, Shaivas and Shaktas

A List of authentic Upanishads can be found here

Some say that bhasya on Svetesvatara Upanishad is not made by Adi Shankara but by later acharyas. the reason for this argument is that in the beginning many references to purANa-s and longer verses are given. Adi shankara in rest of his bhasya-s give very apt verse, at times half verse and not more than one verse for one sloka.

On the other hand, it is believed that Sri Ramanuja has given reference of Mudgal Upanishad, which is one of 108 upanishads, as listed in Muktika Upanishad.

While prasthantraiyi which includes Gita, Upanishads and Brahma Sutras was studied prior to Adi shankara by Dvaitins, Visistadvaitins or advaitins has to be found out. Other acharyas followed footsteps and wrote bhasya-s on prasthantraiyi, which contains same upanishads (10 principle upanishads, as mentioned in Muktika Upanishad), as commented by Shri Adi Shankara.

A point to be noted is that are there any documented facts available in which Authenticity of any upanishad is questioned by any of the acharyas?

Paramacharya Sri Sri Chandrashekhendra (Indira) Saraswati if Kanchi Kamkoti Peetham in his book Vedas, chapter 11, The Ten Upanishads, page 68 mentioned the name of 10 mukhya (main) upanishads. The book vedas is an extract of the larger book 'Hindu Dharma'. Same passage and chapter occurs in the book, 'Hindu Dharma', Part 5, Chapter 33, The Ten Upanishads, page 219. Also note that the book, Hindu Dharma' is only 2 volumes of the larger book, 'Deivaththin Kural' in Tamil, translated in English in the name 'The Voice of God'

In the book he says,

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The following sloka enumerates the ten upanishads:


Isa Kena Kathaa Prasna Munda Maandukya TAithari

Aitareyam Cha Chaandogyam Brahadhaaranyakam Dasa


ईसकेनकथाप्रश्न मुण्ड माण्डूक्य तैत्तिरी ।

एइतरेयंच छान्दोज्यं ब्रह्दारण्यकंदश ॥


Adi Shankara has written his commentary also in the above order of texts.
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Online Source

Muktika Upanishads says

The list of 108 Upanishads is introduced in verses 26-29,

"But by what means is the Kaivalya kind of Moksha [= Mukti] got? The Mandukya is enough; if knowledge is not got from it, then study the Ten Upanishads. Getting knowledge very soon, you will reach my abode. If certainty is not got even then, study the 32 Upanishads and stop. If desiring Moksha without the body, read the 108 Upanishads. Hear their order" *(trans. Warrier)*

Isa Kena Kathaa Prasna Munda Maandukya TAithari

Aitareyam Cha Chaandogyam Brahadhaaranyakam tathA – 30

ईसकेनकथाप्रश्न मुण्ड माण्डूक्य तैत्तिरी ।
एइतरेयंच छान्दोज्यं ब्रह्दारण्यकं तथा ॥ ३० ॥

Note: The word tathA appears instead of word dasa in online copy found at sanskritdocuments.org

For convenience they are put as Numbered List:

1. Isha / Isa / Isavasya Upanishad
2. Kena Upanishad
3. Katha Upanishad
4. Prashna Upanishad
5. Mundaka Upanishad
6. Mandukya Upanishad
7. Taittiriya Upanishad
8. Aitareya Upanishad
9. Chandogya Upanishad
10. Brihadaranyaka Upanishad

If you have noticed, not only the upanishads but their order exactly matches with what Paramacharya says. Paramacharya is an authority on almost all spiritual matters and is revered by all. Being a Shankaracharya, he sticks to traditional method. If Muktika Upanishad is not an authority, then Paramacharya would certainly not have quoted it.

At other places like in Part 5, Chapter 27, The Vedas, Page 196, Paramacharya says that

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It is believed that those who seek liberation need nothing to realise their
goal other than Madukya Upanishad.
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In Page 195 of same chapter, Paramacharya again uses the word 'Dasopanishad'.

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Another distinction of the Yajurveda is that of the ten Upanishads
("Dasopanishad") the first and the last are from it - the
Isavasyopanishadnand the Brhadaranyaka Upanishad.
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Online Source

At another instance, Paramacharya mentions the name of 'Nrsimha Tapini Upanisad' in Part 5, Chapter 38, Page, 261

This indicates that the direct successors of Adi Shankaracharya ji and one of the most revered names among Shankaracharyas, Paramacharya, as he is fondly called out of respect and reverence, considers Muktika Upanishad as genuine and hence all 108 upanishads mentioned in Muktika Upanishad are authentic.

On another instance, Paramacharya considers Upanishad Brahma Yogin or Upanishad Brahman, who was from same Kanchi Matha, as a great ascetic and informs his followers about his achievement of writing commentaries on 108 upanishads and explaninig that due to his achievement, he was honoured with title of 'Upanishad Brahmendra'. Paramacharya himself says that his math is in close contact with Upanishad Brahmendra's Math.

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The Upanisads are believed to have been large in number. Two hundred years ago, an ascetic belonging to Kancipuram wrote a commentary on 108 Upanisads. He earned the name of "Upanisad Brahmendra". His monastic institution is still to be seen in Kanci.
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Source: Veda and Vedanta : Are They Opposed to One Another?, Part 5, Chapter 32, page, 215

Another info about the close association or contact with Upanishad Brahmendra Math can be found here and here.

There are 1180 shaka-s of vedas. Each shakha has one upanishad (essence - jnana Kand), hence there are 1180 upanishads. Most of them are extinct.

It can be concluded that

1. Since 10 upanishads commented by all Acharyas are the exact 10 as mentioned in Muktika Upanishad

2. Brahma Upanishad mentioned in Chandogya Upanishad (3.11.3)

3. Other Upanishads like Atma Upanishad has similar verses as found in Bhagavad Gita

4. KarikA on Maudukya by Shri GauDapada, thereby giving importance to Mandukya Upanishad

are all found in Muktika Upanishad. Hence Muktika Upanishad and all 108 mentioned in Muktika Upanishad are authentic.

PurANa-s and Upa-purANA-s are authentic too

<articles shifted to Authenticity of Puranas, Up-puranas and Sthala Puranas>

...

It is clear from the definition of Shiva that Shiva is none of than Brahman.

Article on Anya-devata worship, and other related articles are shifted to new page Musings - Another Side of Coin

Veda or Agama, which one is supreme authority?

PanchrAtra and Vaikhanasa are agama-s. What are agama-s? Swami Sivananda explains:

The Agamas are theological treatises and practical manuals of divine worship. The Agamas include the Tantras, Mantras and Yantras. These are treatises explaining the external worship of God, in idols, temples, etc. All the Agamas treat of (i) Jnana or Knowledge, (ii) Yoga or Concentration, (iii) Kriya or Esoteric Ritual and (iv) Charya or Exoteric Worship. They also give elaborate details about ontology and cosmology, liberation, devotion, meditation, philosophy of Mantras, mystic diagrams, charms and spells, temple-building, image-making, domestic observances, social rules, public festivals, etc.

Source

In short, agama-s are composed by Sages keeping in mind certain Veda ShAkhA-s. Just like great Rishi-s who had mastered veda-s composed Smriti-s, great Rishi-s also composed Agama-s. Since they are not a part of veda-s, but compliment veda-s, they are secondary in authority as compared to Veda-s which are topmost authority. When they contradict veda-s they have to be discarded.

Lets take an arbitrary example.

Suppose an agama states that - 'Vishnu is supreme', then we will have to find pramANa from veda-s. If pramANa-s are found, then we can accept this statement.

Suppose an agama states that - 'Only Vishnu is supreme and none else', still we can take 'and none else' as indicating one-pointed devotion. Should we take it that agama implies that Rudra is not supreme or that Rudra / Shiva is a Jiva and not Brahman, specially we find pramANa from veda-s which says - 'Purusho vai Rudra' ?

Do agama-s say, 'Only Vishnu is supreme and none else, Rudra is NOT supreme'? They do not speak negatively. It is our mind that takes it negatively. Instead of ignoring other deities, one denigrates them.

What if an agama says the above statement?

In this case, we will have to find pramANa from veda-s. If we find a pramANa from veda-s stating supremacy of Rudra, then we will have to discard this statement as it contradicts veda-s. Veda-s do not eulogize one deity.

I think that this is the reason why acharyas do not denigrate other deities, as denigration is not found in their commentaries on PrasthAntrayi. They are projecting one-pointed devotion by stating supremacy of one deity.

To repeat again, supremacy of one deity does not mean that one has to denigrate another deity. It only means to have one-pointed devotion to a supreme deity, else it would contradict veda-s, which eulogize another deities.

The problem comes when one keeps agama-s in center, consider them as supreme authority and then go on to interpret veda-s in a way that it does not contradict their agama-s.

Similar is the case with PurANa-s and itihAsa (MahAbhArata). Both are often eulogized as the '5th Veda'. It should be taken in literal sense. It means that they are not to be neglected and that they speak the same truth of veda-s but in a very friendly way.

All acharya-s unanimously agree that veda-s are considered as supreme authority, then comes smriti-s (which includes Bhagavad Gita) followed by purANa-s. This gradations does not imply that purANa-s are weak or do not speak truth. Whenever one finds contradiction, one should consider the view of veda-s as final. Perhaps purANa-s are not preserved as very well and are said to contain interpolations here and there.

There are Vaishnava agamas, Shaiva agamas and Shakta agamas, each citing reference from Veda-s and complimenting Veda-s. If at all you call them as vedic, at most they can be called as anSa vedic (partly vedic) and not pUrNa vedic (fully vedic), as they only concentrate on parts of veda-s. Sadly, in present times, Pancaratra-s (Vaishnavas) and Pashupata-s (Shaivas) denigrate rival deities.

All schools during Adi Shankara's time were advaitic

According to Sacchidanandendra Saraswati, during Adi Shankara's time, all school of thoughts agreed on unity of Brahman and jiva as final release. They only differed in approaches like dvaita, Visistadvaita, etc According to Swamiji, the then Panchratra Vaishnavism was different then it is today. Sir Vaishnavas and Madhvas claim to follow the Panchratra Vaishnavism, who are accused for interpolating pancharatra agamas to suit their needs. Many samhitas, aganas and sutras relating to Pancharatra VAishnavism are now extinct.

Swamiji has done research work and is found in book Shuddha Shankara Prakriya Bhaskara Booklet Series

According to popular belief, Adi Shankara was an avatar of Shiva (Dakshinamurty). Hence it is natural to be a Vishnu devotee. Vishnu avatars are devotees of Lord Shiva - Parashurama, Rama and Krishna. I have written on it here.

Not going deep, as per their philosophy, only one God and one path is true. There are 4 Vaishnava sampradaya-s with Gaudiya Vaishnava as the 5th.

Some believe that Krishna is original source of all avatars (Gaudiya Vaishnavas, Nimbarkas and Vallabhacharyas), some say Krishna is an avatar of Vishnu (Madhvas and Ramanujas). So what is the truth? Both cannot be true.

Again, there are basic differences between core philosophies / beliefs of all 5 sampradayas. All cannot be true. which one of them is true?

This automatically disqualifies all other sampradayas except one as non-vedic.

The very philosophy of discarding whole shruti or even parts of authentic shruti / smriti / purana is dreadful. Vaishnavas discards Shiva being praised as supreme Godhead by Brahma-dev, but when same Brahma-dev in chapter 10 praises Vishnu / Krishna as supreme, it is acceptable.

In this context, I think that Nahi Ninda Nyaya is the best approach.

So they even discard a part of Bhagavat Purana. Such is their rigidity and accuse us of being rigid. It reflects their own mental status.

Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu was a Eka Dandi Sanyasi and his guru was Ishvara Puri. As the name suggests his guru was an advaitin. Vaishnava sanyasins are tri-dandi sanyasins. Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu came after Ramanuja. It means that there were already established Vaishnava Mathas. As we know that Ramanuja and Madhva were eka dandi sanyasins and were initiated into Advaita. If Ramanuja wished he could have changed the rules of Sanyasa as per Vaishnava guidelines. This indicates that all Gurus of Vaishnava, who are revered as avatars may have also experienced and preached Advaita as final release, which in time got corrupted by his followers. They only put their philosophy in their way and only differed in the initial approach.

Another great Vaishnava saint who is revered as avatar preached Krishna bhakti as the easiest way but preached that Advaita is the final state. Avatars cannot be wrong nor can they contradict each other as far as final release is concerned. All avatars Govindpada and Patanjali (avatars of Shesha Naga - reference in Madhaviya Shankara Digvijaya), Adi Shankara, 5 Vaishnava Acharyas and Sant Gyandev (Gyaneshwar) would not preach anything contradictory as far as final release or final state is concerned.

What we know about these sampradayas might be a myth, who knows.

Dvaita, Visistadvaita and Advaita are steps leading to ultimate truth

Dikshitar graphically describes dvaita as the lowest step, vishishtadvaita as the middle step and sivadvaita and advaita which are very close to each other as the highest steps. He makes it clear in his work that Srikantha-Bhashya on the Brahmasutra has been written in very close approximation to the trend of thought of Adi Sankara in his own bhashya. Srikanta, according to Dikshitar, propagated his cult on the understanding that sagunopasana (Worship of name and form) is only the first step to nirgunopasana (Propitiation of the nameless and formless), and that it was the real intention of Srikanta that the final truth lies only in Shuddhadvaita. Dikshitar's great dialectical skill is fully reflected in the work called 'Anandalahari chandrika', where he tries to narrow down the differences between the apparently divergent schools of thought and tries to show that the advaita of Sankara is the real eternal truth to which all others try to approximate.

Starting from the basics Understanding Advaita to other articles in the Section 'Advaita Vedanta' up to Musings - Other Side of Coin,

Finally, we conclude that,

Their logical fallacy is a strawman.

By exaggerating, misrepresenting, or just completely fabricating someone's argument, it's much easier to present your own position as being reasonable, but this kind of dishonesty serves to undermine honest rational debate.

They have attacked strawman. Attacking a strawman is to create the illusion of having refuted a proposition by replacing it with a superficially similar yet unequivalent proposition (the "straw man"), and to refute it, without ever having actually refuted the original position. This technique has been used throughout history in polemical debate, particularly in arguments about highly charged, emotional issues.

So, they, accusers have created a false identity and then knocked it down, giving a false sense of victory.

Logical arguments put forth by Vyasatirth are successfully refuted in the celebrated with ‘Advaita Siddhi’ by Madhusudan Saraswati (links given on References and Sources Page)

After dispelling doubts, lets see scriptural evidences of Advaita. Lets see Advaita in Shastras.

Part II

Advaita in Shastras

ADVAITA IN SHASTRAS

Namaste,

This is Page 1/4 of Part II.

This part contains quotes from shastras supporting the theory of advaita vedanta .

Shastras are an authority, any path has to be consistent with them. Vedas, Upanishads and Bhagavad Gita are the pillars of Sanatana Dharma. Hence Reference to advaita teachings in shastras has to be pointed out. References from various smritis (bhagavad Gita, Guru Gita, Uttara Gita, Shiva Gita and other lesser known Gitas) and shrutis (major and minor upanishads) are given. References from Srimad Bhagavatam are also quoted.

This part has been the most difficult, not because it is tough to get details, but it has put me in a fix. I am trying to prove, acknowledge that Advaita is authentic and Adi Shankaracharya is genuine. After collecting references from shastras that teach Advaita, we can say,

'Yes Advaita is authentic, consistent with Vedas and Adi Shankara was one of the greatest proponent of traditional advaita'

This word 'Ye's, gives me the pain. It shows my own acknowledgement to this vAda. I feel it is an insult to the entire paramparA and the great beloved acharya Shri Adi Shankara, as a ajnani cannot judge a jnani, nor one should try to.

This site is my silent response. It's an attempt to give correct picture and leave it's discretion to the reader. More than a response, I have created this site as I do not want others to waste time collecting references from shastras. After going through this website, questioning and acknowledgement should be replaced by Faith and one should say,

'Advaita is authentic, consistent with Vedas and Adi Shankara was one of the greatest proponent of traditional advaita'

Even if one person would speak the above statement from heart, my humble attempt will be fulfilled.

Four mahAvAkyAs - Jiva Brahma aikya

[Updated on 19-Apr-2022]

jIva (Jiva) is accepted in Advaita from vyavahArika Standpoint or Empirical reality. When Brahman takes upon itself upAdhI-s like panchbhUtas and enters into panch koSas (5 bodies), illumines the mind and mind through five senses experiences the outer world, then a sense of individuality is experienced. Mind gets it's power from Brahman. This tuning of mind with 5 bodies and 5 senses producing a sense of individuality thereby generating Ego (ahamkAra) and sense of feeling of either 'I am Body' or 'I am Jiva' is known as jIva-bhAva (Jiva-BhAva). In short Jiva is mind-body-ego complex. This attachment is due to ignorance or avidyA of one's true nature. When one seeks to know this 'I' which is either Body or mind or Ego or Jiva, then Jiva-hood (jIva-bhAva) is negated by detaching oneself i.e. 'I' from mind-body-ego complex. This 'I' or Aham is the Atman

or true Self which is omnipresent, eternal, infiinite and immovable (because it is already present everywhere, so it does not need to move). **This Atman realised as Brahman. So 'I or 'Aham' or 'Atman' is Brahman is the realisation. 'Aham Brahmasmi' - or 'I am Brahman' one of the mahAvAkya.** This knowledge that 'I' is actually Brahman i.e. Atman is Brahman is known by consciousness. It is also known as pure intelligence or chaitanya also known as praGYA. This knowledge of 'I' am Brahman is not different from Brahman. So **'praGYAnam Brahman' or 'this consciousness is Brahman' is another mahAvAkya.** In order to initiate a disciple into this BrahmaGYAna, a guru initiates one by instruction - **'tat-tvam-asi' meaning 'You are that [Brahman]'.** A Guru also instructs disciple to find the true nature of the 'I' or whether one is body, mind, ego or Jiva. What is this 'I', who am I? this is **the second instruction 'ayamAtmA Brahman' meaning 'This Atman is Brahman'. This is second updeshaka mahAvAkya**. **This is also the realisation of the jiGYAsu or mumukshu (seeker of truth).** In order to explain the non-difference between Atman ('I') and Brahman from vyavahArika standpoint, an upadehsa is given 'This Atman or 'I' is Brahman'. In this way, all four mahAvAkyas are the very essence of Advaitic realisation or Keval GYAna or Kaivalya prApti. After this realisation, one has to firmly establish oneself in Atma-sthiti or BrAhmi-sthiti. When this abiding in Self or Brahman ecomes natural, then nirvikalpa samAdhi becomes effortless. When consciousness comes down to dual plane, one experiences that 'I' is everywhere. This Jagat is Brahman or Sarvam Khalu-idam Brahman. So the world is not seen as different from oneself, as a GYAnI is established in the underlyingreality which pervades all the jagat and panchmahAbhUtas (earth, water, fire, wind and space) and is their substratum. So the mind experiences this oneness. When one has both experience - Nirvikalpa Samadhi and Sarvam Khalu-idam Brahman, one becomes Jivan Mukta and later on Videha Mukta.

To summarize, that which one thinks of oneself as Jiva, upon seeking oneself realises that one is not Jiva but eternal free entity or tatva. This tatva is known as Atman. It is verily the 'I'. However, this 'I' is infinite in nature, It is Sat-Chit-Ananda, it is eternal, omnipresent. This is none other then Brahman. So what is known as Atman, this 'I'-ness is in reality Brahman. This is realised after Jivahood is renounced by the seeker.

While Jivas are many and they transmigrate from one body to another, upon open, unbiased, exploration or seeking of what really is Jiva is come to be known as mind-body-ego-complex. This knowledge of Jiva being Mind-body-Ego complex is known as pure intelligence or praGYA. This knowledge of the nature of Jiva is known by being a witness. One concludes that one is something different and wtiness of Jiva or Jiva-hood. When one detaches oneself from Jivahood, one renounces it and realises oneself as eternally free, infinite tatva. This realisation, which happens after seeking oneselve's true nature is known as Atma-GYAna or Self Realisation. It is not Jiva-GYAna or Jiva-realisation. Jiva is not eternal. Jiva is not experienced as 'I'. There is still a witness to this Jiva-bhAva. This fact is experienced by all genuine seekers of truth. This Jiva or Jiva-bhAva is absent in Atma-GYAna which is of non dual nature.

To conclude, a seeker's journey starts with initiation into mahAvAkya - 'Tat-Tvam-Asi' or 'You are that [Brahman], as updeshak mahAvAkya. Then by yukti, Guru instructs disciple to be witness and detach oneself from all that is anAtmAn. In this process Jivahood is renounced. That second Updesha is another mahAvAkya 'ayamAtmAn Brahman' or 'This Atman is Brahman'. Then this witness which is pure intelligence or consciousness or praGYA which knows 'I' is not mind-body-ego or Jiva realises 'I' is Brahman as one experiences 'pragYAn Brahman'. After establishing oneself in Brahman i.e. Atma-sthiti and then when one comes down to dual plane, one exclaims 'Aham BrahmAsmi' or 'I am Brahman'

So Jiva here in the claim that Jiva-Brahman aikya is to be taken as 'I', as it is presumed that one is a Jiva.

The statement Jiva-Brahman Aikya stands true when bhAga-tyAga lakshaNa is applied. It is also known as jahad-ajahd lakshaNa. In this The upAdhis of both Jiva and Brahman (SaguNa Brahman i.e. Ishvara) are removed. So avidya and panchkoshas, mind-body,ego complex is negated or say avidya mAyA is negated from Jiva and Vidya mAyA is negated from Ishvara. What remains is pure Brahman. In this sense, we say Jiva-Brahman aikya. We do not say Jiva-Isvara aikya. There is big difference between the two statements.

VaiShNavas wrongly interpret three concepts of advaita

'I' is Jiva, which is incorect.
Jiva is Atman with All upAdhIs. In other words, Jiva and Atman are used interchangeably and both are of the size of aNu
They also take Brahman assAkAra Ishvara whereas it is saguNa Brahman which is Ishvara.

From vyavahArika standpoint While Jivas are many and are admitted as 'anSa' (ansh - part) of saguNa Brahman, when under the influence of avidyA (ignorance), Atman is always one as it is omnipresent, infinite tatva. In other words, Atman is never plural, whenever it is mentioned so, it refers to 'Jiva'. At times, this Atman which is 'I' is referred to Body, mind or ego also for the sake of easy understanding by disciple whose consciousness identifies itself with mind, body, etc.

Advaita is the only vAda, whose core sAdhanA is guided by the very essence of four mahAvAkyas Infact the whole process is knowing one's true nature. The forgetfulness of one's true nature is accepted and need for repeated instruction 'You are that [Brahman], Svetketu' - Ch. Up 6:15:1-3 and the sAdhanA of negation of what is not Atman i.e. neti-neti (not this, not this) is mentioned in BrahadAraNayaka Upanishad II-iii-6 (2.3.6).

Chanting of 'OM' also results into same sthiti. OM is the substratum of entire universe. BhagavAna in gItA says 'I am praNava' and OM is undoubtedly nirAkAra. So by being a witness to OM, one's mind can merge into Atman by seeking the source of OM. Source of OM which is Brahman. OM transcends waking, dream and deep sleep. It enters turiyA avasthA (state). This turiyA state is represented by the chandra bindu in the symbol OM and is known by silence while chanting OM.

Advaita is therefore not a sampradAya or a sect, but is pUrNa vaidika dharma, a Pure Vedantic Path. It accpets all six pramaNas and all the purANas in full without rejecting any parts.

Advaita is therefore not a sampradAya or a sect, but is pUrNa vaidika dharma, a Pure Vedantic Path.

Let us begin with advaita in shastras by citing these mahAvAkyas.

There are many mahavakyas indicating jiva-brahma aikya and there are 100's of mahavakyas, but 4 mahavakyas selected from 4 vedas.

The four mahAvAkyA (mahaavaakyaas) of 4 vedas are

1. प्रज्ञानम् ब्रह्म Prajñānam brahma (Consciousness is Brahman) - Rig Veda, Aitreya Upanishad 3.3

2. अहं ब्रह्मास्मि Aham brahmāsmi (I am Brahman) - Yajur Veda, bruhadAraNyaka (BrihadAraNyaka) Upanishad - 1.4.10

3. तत्वमसि Tattvamasi (That thou art) - Sama Veda, Chandogya Upanishad - 6.8.7

4. अयमात्मा ब्रह्म Ayamātmā brahma (This Atman is Brahman) - Atharva Veda, Mandukya Upanishad 2 or 1.2 in Gaudpada Karika)

These 4 mahavakyas talk about the unity and oneness Atman (Jiva) and brahman.

paingala upanishad which is cited by Adi Sankara., lists 4 mahAvAkya-s.

अथ हैनं पैङ्गलः प्रपच्छ याज्ञवल्क्यं महावाक्यविवरणमनुब्रूहीति .

स होवाच याज्ञवल्क्यस्तत्त्वमसि त्वं तदसि त्वं ब्रह्मास्यहं ब्रह्मास्मीत्यनुसन्धानं कुर्यात् .

III-1-2. Then Paingala said to Yajnavalkya: Set forth the explanation of the major text(s) [Maha-vakyas].

Yajnavalkya replied: Thou art That; Thou That art; Thou Brahman art; I am Brahman – One should meditate thus.

More mahAvAkyas

Each Upanishad has it's own mahavakyas, but only few are popular.

5. ब्रह्म सत्यं जगन्मिथ्या Brahma Satyam Jagan Mithya - nirAlambopaniShada - 28 (Niraalamba Upanishad - 28)

Brahman (the Absolute) is alone real; this world is unreal; the Jiva or the individual soul is non-different from Brahman.

6. सर्वं खल्व् इदं ब्रह्म Sarvam Khau-idam Brahma - Sama Veda, Chandogya Upanishad 3.14.1)

Everything 'else' is (also) brahman OR

All this is Brahman

7. नेह नानाऽस्ति किं चन।neha nānāsti kiñcana (There is nothing else anywhere) Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 4.4.19

Many people only consider evidences from prasthAntraiyI. Upon searching on net, you will find many websites and blogs dedicated to showing evidence of Advaita n Shastras. Apart from Gita and Major Upanishads, I have covered many smritis and minor upanishads to support authenticity of Advaita. No upanishads are unimportant, major or minor does not make any difference. In the same way, there are about 30 Gitas (smritis), which are essense of purANA-s. Some quotes from Selected Gita-s are taken.

Arjuna asks for the proof of Jiva-Brahma aikya in Uttara Gita

CHAPTER-II

अर्जुन उवाच
ज्ञात्वा स्वगतं ब्रह्म सर्वज्ञं पपरमेश्वरम् ।

अहं ब्रह्मोति निर्देष्टुं प्रमाणं तत्र किं भवेत् ॥ १ ॥

Arjuna asked:

1. Realizing the omniscient and omnipotent Brahman as the Supreme Lord by what means of proof can he (the jiva) define himself as 'I am Brahman'?

श्री भगवानुवाच

यथा जलं जले क्षिप्तं क्षीरे क्षीरं घृते घृतम् ।

अविशेषो भवेत्तद्वज्जीवात्मपरमात्मनो: ॥ २ ॥

Sri Bhagavan said:

2. As there is no distinction between water mixed with water, milk when mixed with milk, butter mixed with butter, similar is the non-differentiation of the Individual Self (jivatman) with the Supreme Self (paramatman)

Para-Brahma Upanishad does not accept the union of Jiva-Shiva (Supreme Brahman), but talks about Ajaata vaada that only Self (as Para Brahman) exists and sadhaka realizes that Jiva is actually Brahman. There is no duality.

2. The juncture of the individual and supreme consciousness is rejected as there is a tinge

of distinction involved in it. (When distinctionlessness alone exists) it is the highest (i.e. Brahman) and there is nothing other than that. (When Self-realization does not result by the study, etc., of the scripture) then one shall resort to the eight-limbed Yoga; this like a flower of a plantain tree (ever rubbing against the stem and attaining the state of a blossom) succeeds (in attaining perfection). That which remains as the source of Indra (Ishvara) is ever awake there, as the source of the Veda (as Parameshvara). Beyond (the bonds of) good and bad, he (the ascetic) is not tainted by (accidental) good or bad actions. This effulgent Being is the (bestower of) favour on other gods (like the god Brahma), the 'internal check' of the form of unattached pure consciousness, the Purusha, the Hamsa of the Pranava, the supreme Brahman. It is not the chief Prana (vital breath). The Pranava is the Self (Jiva). (This state of the Jiva) remains as the first effulgent being. How can he who knows thus (the true nature of the Pranava) set forth difference (between the Jiva and Brahman) ? He realizes that the Jiva is Brahman (alone).

OM

OM represents nirAkAra tatva. The importance of OM is evident from the fact that an entire Upanishad Mandukya Upanishad is dedicated to explain OM. OM is connected with Shiva, Vishnu / Krishna, Ganesha and NirguNa Brahman. Almost all Principle Upanishads and many Minor Upanishads describe OM and advice us to meditate on OM. Mahanaraya Upanishad which has many Gayatri mantras of different deities and then eulogizes Vishnu and Rudra also advises us to to renounce all karma kand and meditate on OM. Bhagavan in Gita has accepted OM. There is no deity named OM and so we do not find any temple dedicated to 'deity' OM. Even though OM is connected with Ishvara, it is not found in our glorious history that by mere chanting of OM (and nothing else), one gets darshan of his beloved deity. Infact it is said that adding OM to any mantra increases it's potency.

For Advaitin Vedantins, this proof is more than enough. Nothing more needs to be said.

Advaita in Bhagavad Gita

Bhagavan in Gita (2:55 to 2:59), talks about 4 qualities of sthita prajna. Prajna also means buddhi. The intelligent which is firmly established in Brahman is called sthita prajna (Prajñānam brahma).

प्रजहाति यदा कामान् सर्वान् पार्थ मनोगतान्।
आत्मन्येवात्मना तुष्टः स्थितप्रज्ञस्तदोच्यते।।2.55।।

2:55 O Partha, when one fully renounces all the desires that have entered the mind, and remains satisfied in the Self alone by the Self, then he is called a man of steady wisdom (sthita prajna).

यदा संहरते चायं कूर्मोऽङ्गानीव सर्वशः।
इन्द्रियाणीन्द्रियार्थेभ्यस्तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता।।2.58।।

2.58 And when this one fully withdraws the senses from the objects of the senses, as a tortoise wholly (withdraws) the limbs, then his wisdom remains established.

Bhagavan in Gita says that this world is transient (temporary, impermanent)

मामुपेत्य पुनर्जन्म दुःखालयमशाश्वतम्।
नाप्नुवन्ति महात्मानः संसिद्धिं परमां गताः।।8.15।।

8.15 As a result of reaching Me, the exalted ones who have attained the highest perfection **do not get rebirth which is an abode of sorrows and which is impermanent.**

अविभक्तं च भूतेषु विभक्तमिव च स्थितम्।
भूतभर्तृ च तज्ज्ञेयं ग्रसिष्णु प्रभविष्णु च।।13.17।।

13.17 And the Knowable, **though undivided, appears to be existing as divided in all beings**, and It is the sustainer of all beings as also the devourer and originator.

Source: http://202.3.77.102/acquia/?q=node/20

Brahman in Bhagavad Gita

Krushna also uses the word Brahman in Gita

संन्यासस्तु महाबाहो दुःखमाप्तुमयोगतः।
योगयुक्तो मुनिर्ब्रह्म नचिरेणाधिगच्छति।।5.6।।

5.6 But, O mighty-armed one, renunciation is hard to attain without (Karma-) yoga. The meditative man equipped with yoga attains Brahman without delay.

अक्षरं ब्रह्म परमं स्वभावोऽध्यात्ममुच्यते।
भूतभावोद्भवकरो विसर्गः कर्मसंज्ञितः।।8.3।।

8.3 "Aksharam Brahma Paramam" - The imperishable is Brahman, the Supreme. It is supremely above time, space and causation.

End of any chapter in Gita is: Iti srimad bhagawat Gita su, upnishad su, brahma vidyayam, yog Shastre, Sri Krishna Arjuna Samvade, Atma Sayyam Yogo naama Sastodhyayah.

Similarly many verses alone from Gita can be given. Since is the essence of Upanishads, upanishads will also contain verses on advaita.

Neutrality of Ishwara / Brahman in Gita

नादत्ते कस्यचित्पापं न चैव सुकृतं विभुः।
अज्ञानेनावृतं ज्ञानं तेन मुह्यन्ति जन्तवः।।5.15।।

5.15 The Omnipresent neither accepts anybody's sin nor even virtue. Knowledge remains covered by ignorance. Thereby the creatures become deluded.

Bhagavan talks of this world as Mechanical

ईश्वरः सर्वभूतानां हृद्देशेऽर्जुन तिष्ठति।
भ्रामयन्सर्वभूतानि यन्त्रारूढानि मायया।।18.61।।

18.61 The Lord dwells in the hearts of all beings, O Arjuna, causing all beings, by His illusive power, to revolve as if mounted on a machine.

Bhagavan Krishna explains OM in Bhagavad Gita and Uttara Gita

Bhagavan in Gita says

रसोऽहमप्सु कौन्तेय प्रभास्मि शशिसूर्ययोः।
प्रणवः सर्ववेदेषु शब्दः खे पौरुषं नृषु।।7.8।।

7.8: O son of Kunti, I am the taste of water, I am the effulgence of the moon and the sun; (the letter) Om in all the Vedas, the sound in space, and manhood in men.

Krushna says in Gita that I am OM. Mandukya Upanishad also begins with 'Hari OM'. all 12 verses explain OM and it's transcendental nature.

OM (AUM) represents niraakaara brahman. The chandra bindu refers the fourth turiya state, which bhagavan himself has accepted.

Refer Advaita in Mandukya Upanishad

Bhagavan in Uttara Gita says

Chapter I

5. He is called Brahman, who, devoid of all desires, and by the process of Yoga, sits in that state of meditation in which he assimilates his own Self-mantra (Pranava or Aum) with the Hamsa (Paramatma).

17. The syllable (Aum) with which the Vedas begin, which figures in the middle of the Vedas, and with which the Vedas end, unites Prakrti with its Own Self; but that which is beyond this Prakrti-united-Pranava is Mahesvara.

ARJUNA ASKED:

48. It is evident that the letters are pronounced by means of the teeth, lips, palate, throat, etc.; therefore how can they (letters) be termed indestructible (Nitya), when their destructibility is apparent on their very face?

SRI BHAGAVAN SAID:

49. That letter is called indestructible which is self-pronunciation, i.e., without the effort of any pronunciation, which is neither vowel nor consonant, which is beyond the eight places of pronunciation, which is not subject to long or short accents, and which is thoroughly devoid of the Usma Varnas (i.e, the four letters, S'a, Sa, Sa, Ha, called Usma on account of their pronunciation depending greatly on the help of Vayu or air – meaning, therefore, subject to no air or breath).

6. For the human being, the attainment of the state of Hamsa (I am He), within his own limits, is considered the highest jnana. That which remains merely a passive witness between the Hamsa and Non-Hamsa, i.e., the Paramatman and the destructible portion of the human being, is the Aksara Purusa in the form of Kutasha-Caitanya (Atma-Buddhi). When the knower finds and sees this Akara Purusa in him, he is saved from all future troubles of birth and death in this world.

Also note that OM is mentioned in Mandukya and Prasna Upanishad, which is quoted later.

Krishna talks about Advaita and Maya in Srimad Bhagavatam

There are verses in which Krushna says about prakruti (maya) and talks about his transcendental nature in chapter 7 beginning verses (7:1 - 7:15) and says that one can attain it not by just reading shastras but by meditating on me i.e. Through direct experience. Krushna also says that Maya is his illusionary power. Krushna also says that maya is a-sat (not -real = false, i.e. with no real existence in Srimad Bhagavatam 10:14.22

tasmād idaṁ jagad aśeṣam asat-svarūpaṁ
svapnābham asta-dhiṣaṇaṁ puru-duḥkha-duḥkham
tvayy eva nitya-sukha-bodha-tanāv anante
māyāta udyad api yat sad ivāvabhāti

Therefore this entire universe, which like a dream is by nature unreal, nevertheless appears real, and thus it covers one's consciousness and assails one with repeated miseries. This universe appears real because it is manifested by the potency of illusion emanating from You, whose unlimited transcendental forms are full of eternal happiness and knowledge.

source: http://srimadbhagavatam.com/10/14/22/en

In the verses pointed above in Gita, Krushna is also talking about mAyA, but the center or the laxyArtha is not mAyA but Brahman. Is Krushna talking about mAyAvAd or BrahmanvAd? Ishwara, who is mAyA-pati (controller or master of mAyA), is always in communion with Brahman as it is the manifestation of this Brahman and can return to it's nirguna state at will. Even Ishwara has six upAdhis (strength, knowledge, fame, wealth, great beauty and detachment or (sarva-shaktiman, sarvajna, tyaaga, aishvarya, vairagya, Sri). Krushna in Gita does not talk about mAyA, in the sense that it is real or that mAyA is supreme. Brahman or vasudev is always the laxyaartha. In the same way, in advaita, brahman is the laxyartha and mAyA is used to explain why we do not see brahman.

More Verses from Srimad Bhagavatam / Bhagavat Purana of Advaita Nature

SB 10.14.22: Therefore this entire universe, which like a dream is by nature unreal, nevertheless appears real, and thus it covers one's consciousness and assails one with repeated miseries. This universe appears real because it is manifested by the potency of illusion emanating from You, whose unlimited transcendental forms are full of eternal happiness and knowledge.

SB 10.14.23: You are the one Supreme Soul, the primeval Supreme Personality, the Absolute Truth — self-manifested, endless and beginningless. You are eternal and infallible, perfect and complete, without any rival and free from all material designations.

Your happiness can never be obstructed, nor have You any connection with material contamination. Indeed, You are the indestructible nectar of immortality.

SB 10.14.24: Those who have received the clear vision of knowledge from the sunlike spiritual master can see You in this way, as the very Soul of all souls, the Supersoul of everyone's own self. Thus understanding Your original personality, they are able to cross over the ocean of illusory material existence.

SB 10.14.25: A person who mistakes a rope for a snake becomes fearful, but he then gives up his fear upon realizing that the so-called snake does not exist. Similarly, for those who fail to recognize You as the Supreme Soul of all souls, the expansive illusory material existence arises, but knowledge of You at once causes it to subside.

SB 10.14.26: The conception of material bondage and the conception of liberation are both manifestations of ignorance. Being outside the scope of true knowledge, they cease to exist when one correctly understands that the pure spirit soul is distinct from matter and always fully conscious. At that time bondage and liberation no longer have any significance, just as day and night have no significance from the perspective of the sun.

SB 10.14.27: Just see the foolishness of those ignorant persons who consider You to be some separated manifestation of illusion and who consider the self, which is actually You, to be something else, the material body. Such fools conclude that the supreme soul is to be searched for somewhere outside Your supreme personality.

SB 10.14.28: O unlimited Lord, the saintly devotees seek You out within their own bodies by rejecting everything separate from You. Indeed, how can discriminating persons appreciate the real nature of a rope lying before them until they refute the illusion that it is a snake.

Source: http://srimadbhagavatam.com/10/14/en

More verses

BP 1.2.11: **tatvavetta-s (the knowers of truth), calls advaita-GYAna as tatva. Some call this tatva as brahma, some paramAtmA or some 'bhagavAna'**.

bhAgavat purANa says,

BP 3.32.26: **GYAnamAtra para.m brahma**

BP 3.32.28: **GYAnameka.m parAcInairindriyairbrahma nirguNa.m**

Translation of full verses:

BP 3.32.26: **It is GYAna that is pra-brahma, parameSvara / paramAtma, Isvara,**

puruSa; the same bhagavAn is himself jIva, SarIra, viShaya-s, senses, etc that is manifested is different forms.

BP 3.32.28: **Gyana i.e. Brahman is one [without a second], it is nirguNa**, but still, due to extrovert senses, this brahman, due to illusion, it is experienced (Abhasa) in the form of different forms / objects (vibhinna padArtha-s) of the nature of word (Sabda), etc

i.e. the one, without the second the Brahman, which is knowledge, due to extrovert senses and due to illusion, is experienced in different forms or objects which can be known by the 5 senses via qualities like words (Sabda), etc. Here Sabda means speech. Sabda represents all 5 senses and their GYAnedriya-s like

Sabda (words) → ears
rUpa (form) → eyes
rasa (taste) → tongue
sparSa (touch) → skin and
gandha (smell) → nose

In other words, Brahman, the one without a second, though nirguNa, i.e. without guNa-s (attributes, beyond sattva, rajas and tamas), and so inconceivable is wrongly conceived with the help of mind and 5 senses and GYAnendriya-s, due to extrovert senses (extrovert mind).

Non Duality in Bhagavat Purana

BP 11.10.32: There is multiplicity of atma so long as there is inequality among the three Gunas and **while this multiplicity of atma doesn't get vanished from the mind , the Jeeva remains in bondage forever.**

OR

BP 11.10.32: As long as atman experiences separate existence among three gunas, atman will have to take birth in many forms. **As long as there is dependence on these gunas i.e. atman keeps experiencing this multiplicity of 3 gunas, it will remain in bondage of three gunas**. – BP 11.10.32

Likewise, there is a character in Srimad Bhagavat called Jada Bharat, who lived an advaita life.

Advaita in Bhagavat Purana - Kapila Gita

Updated on 20-Feb-2023

> Gave correct references of Bhagavat Purana. Earlier only refernces were given of Kapila gita Sara which is a collection of selected shlokas by Swami Tejomayananda. They are marked as KG 1.22, etc.

Apologies for the error.

Complete Kapila Gita can be found here.
Title: **Kapila Gita FULL Ch 23-33 of Bhagavat Purana Skanda 3 - Sanskrit-English**
It forms a part of Skanda 3 from chapter 23 to 33 of Bhagavat Purana.

Bhagavat Purana has many sloka-s that support advaita. In the 3rd skandha, there is a discussion between mother devAhuti, a disciple, and her son, Lord Kapila Muni, Guru. We have listed a few verses here.

Advaita devotees never perish

BP 3.25.38 / KG 1.22: Those for whom I am the supreme beloved, the Self, son, friend, Guru, well-wisher, and dear Lord (ISTa deva); and who meditate on My peaceful form, never perish as unwinking time has no power over them. *Kapila Gita Sara 1.22*

Jiva is renounced

BP 3.25.39-40 / KG 1.23-24: **I take such devotees across death who, having renounced** all others, this world, the other world, **the jiva-hood** that goes from this world to the other, the body, and all that relates to it like prosperity, animals, and houses, worship Me alone of universal form with single pointed devotion - *Kapila Gita Sara 1.23-24*

Jiva is destroyed - Nirvikalp Samadhi

BP 3.33.26 / KG 3.13: **Due to the elimination of jIva-hood, and the mind firmly abiding in th Reality, the Lord, who is the support of all jIva-s, her afflictions were destroyed and she attained total peace.** *Kapila Gita Sara 3.13*

BP 3.33.27 / KG 3.14: **As her mind remained absorbed in the Truth, she transcended the delusion of the qualities of prakriti and, at that time, did not even remember her body like the one who awakes (does not remember) objects seen in the dream.** – *Kapila Gita Sara 2.14*

PuruSa was attribuless before creation

BP 3.26.3 / KG 2.3: **Before creation, the PuruSa was the beginningless Self, attributeless, beyond prakriti, the very subject and Self-shining, and even now it alone pervades the world.** – *Kapila Gita Sara 2.3*

Swami Tejomayananda further explains the meaning of AtmA (Self) from viShNu purANa as -

AtmA is that which pervades (the universe), takes back (the universe at the time of dissolution), enjoys (as the illuminator or experiencer of) objects here (in the world), and has eternal existence.

PuruSa manifested as Prakriti

BP 3.26.4 / KG 2.4: **The same infinite Lord, by chance alone, in sport, became manifested as the subtle prakriti with qualities.** – *Kapila Gita Sara 2.4*

BP 3.26.5 / KG 2.5: Prakriti with its qualities creates a variety of being like itself. **The Lord/Self having seen the creation got (as it were) completely deluded through the veiling of knowledge.** – *Kapila Gita Sara 2.5*

PuruSa does not get affected by prakriti

BP 3.27.1 / KG 2.9: The puruSa, even though dwelling in prakriti, does not get affected by the qualities of prakriti, as he is immutable, non-doer, and attributeless like the sun in water. – *Kapila Gita Sara 2.9*

Objects do not exist in reality

BP 3.27.4 / KG 2.12 **Indeed, even though objects do not exist really**, the samsAra does not seem to end. Just as one who broads on objects meets with disaster alone, even in the dream. – *Kapila Gita Sara 2.12*

How can there be freedom in the presence of qualities of Prakriti?

DevAhuti, has doubts as how can one get rid of prakriti

BP 3.27.17 / KG 2.14: **O Lord! What if the prakriti does not leave the puruSa due to mutual interdependence and eternal coexistence?** – *Kapila Gita Sara 2.14*

Devahuti gives an example to support her point.

BP 3.27.18 / KG 2.15: Just as smell cannot exist without earth, sapidity without water, in the same way there is mutual dependence and coexistence of the mind (prakriti) and the Supreme (puruSa) – *Kapila Gita Sara 2.15*

BP 3.27.19 / KG 2.16: Therefore, **how can there be freedom in the presence of the qualities of prakriti? (For prakriti) causes the bondage in action to the puruSa who is a non-doer. -** – *Kapila Gita Sara 2.16*

Finally, devahuti concludes

BP 3.27.20 / KG: 2.17: Sometimes, by the discrimination of truth, the terrible fear (on bondage) is removed. But since it's cause is not removed, it may come back again. – *Kapila Gita Sara 2.17*

Reply

Kapila Muni, the Lord replies,

BP 3.27.21-23 / KG 2.18-20: **The bondage of puruSa by prakriti is burnt up by spiritual practices performed day and night by prakriti (body-mind) itself,** like the fuel by the fire in the cup of the araNi. The practices are causeless ("choiceless) performance of one's duties, purity of mind, intense devotion to Me, nourished by constant listening, knowledge with clear vision of Truth, strong dispassion, intense meditation accompanied by austerity, and absorption of the mind. – *Kapila Gita Sara 2.18-20*

jIva does not get deluded when -

BP 3.27.24 / KG 2.21: **That prakriti which has been completely enjoyed, then discarded, whose evil effects are seen constantly, can cause no harm to one who abides in the glory of one's own Self.** – *Kapila Gita Sara 2.21*

The above statement is explained further with the help of example.

BP 3.27.25 / KG: 2.22: Just as a dream causes a lot of sorrow to one who has not awaken, but the same does not delude one who has woken up. – *Kapila Gita Sara 2.22*

A person when asleep dreams and takes a role where he enjoys, suffers but on awakening, he realizes that everything was illusion and not a reality. Further bhagavAn says,

BP 3.27.26 / KG 2.23: **In the same way, prakriti never harms him who knows the Truth and who revels in the Self, as his mind is always united with Me.** – *Kapila Gita Sara 2.23*

Earlier, it was said that puruSa was formless and attributeless (without qualities) prior to creation. Our journey too is to go back to this state where there is no one else other than Self.

Advaita in Guru Gita

To add to it, Guru Gita (part of Skanda PurANA) also talks about the glories of Brahman, who is the Real Guru - Sat-Chit-Ananda Atman, to whom even Lord Shiva salutes.

Guru Gita talks that Brahman, Guru and Shiva are not different.

Guru Tatva and Brahman in Guru Gita

अचिन्त्याव्यक्तरूपाय निर्गुणाय गुणात्मने ।
समस्त जगदाधारमूर्तये ब्रह्मणे नमः||

Prostrations to Brahman, the unthinkable, the unmanifest, beyond the three Gunas(Sattva,Rajas & Tamas qualities of Nature) yet the Self of Gunas, the Substratum behind the whole universe.(1)

वेद्शास्त्रपुराणानि चेतिहासादिकानि च ।
मंत्रयंत्रविद्यादिनिमोहनोच्चाटनादिकम् ||

शैवशाक्तागमादिनि ह्यन्ये च बहवो मताः ।
अपभ्रंशाः समस्तानां जीवानां भ्रांतचेतसाम् ||

जपस्तपोव्रतं तीर्थं यज्ञो दानं तथैव च ।
गुरु तत्वं अविज्ञाय सर्वं व्यर्थं भवेत् प्रिये ||

The Vedas, the Shastras, Puranas, the Itihasas etc., the science of Mantras, Yantras Mohana, Uchatana etc., sects like the Shaiva, Agama, Shakta, etc., and other sects existing in the world today are merely false theories expressed in corrupted words which confuse the ignorant and deluded Jivas. Japa austerities, observances, pilgrimage sacrifice, charity - all these become a mere waste without understanding the Guru Tattva. (19, 20, 21)

गुरुबुध्यात्मनो नान्यत् सत्यं सत्यं वरानने ।
तल्लभार्थं प्रयत्नस्तु कर्त्तवयशच मनीषिभिः ||

The Guru is not different from the conscious Self. Without doubt, this is the truth; therefore wise men should make an effort to seek knowledge of Atman from Him. (22)

गूढाविद्या जगन्माया देहशचाज्ञानसम्भवः |
विज्ञानं यत्प्रसादेन गुरुशब्देन कथयते ||

The hidden ignorance, absence of the Knowledge of Self, the world- Maya, the body are all caused by ignorance (Ajnana). By whose grace one attains direct Knowledge of the Self- he is known by the name Guru. (23)

देही ब्रह्म भवेद्यस्मात् त्वत्कृपार्थवदामि तत् |
सर्वपापविशुद्धात्मा श्रीगुरोः पादसेवनात् ||

Out of compassion for you, I shall tell you how the embodied soul becomes Brahman, having been purified of all sins by serving the feet of the Guru. (24)

नित्यं ब्रह्म निराकारं निर्गुणं बोधयेत् परम् |
भासयन् ब्रह्मभावं च दीपो दीपान्तरं यथा ||

The Guru is one who instructs the disciple about attributeless, eternal Brahman, and there by reveals the Brahmanbhava (feeling of being Brahman) in his heart just like one lamp kindles another lamp is the Guru. (75)

गुरुप्रादतः स्वात्मन्यात्मारामनिरिक्षणात् |
समता मुक्तिमर्गेण स्वात्मज्ञानं प्रवर्तते ||

By steadiness in the path to liberation, by seeing one's own Self in oneself, by the practice of introspection within and by the Grace of the Guru, the Knowledge of the Self dawns in the Sadhaka. (76)

एक एवाद्वितीयोऽहं गुरुवाक्येन निश्चितः ||
एवमभ्यास्ता नित्यं न सेव्यं वै वनान्तरम् ||

अभ्यासान्निमिषणैव समाधिमधिगच्छति |
आजन्मजनितं पापं तत्क्षणादेव नश्यति ||

On the advice of the Guru, if one meditates with firm determination on the principle of "I am one without duality" need not resort to forest for penances, and the constant practice of the above principle brings about samadhi and his sins are burnt instantaneously. (94 &

95)

तस्मात्सर्वप्रयत्नेन सर्वसंगविवर्जितः |
विहाय शास्त्रजालानि गुरुमेव समाश्रयेत् ||

Therefore discarding all kinds of contacts with people, by all possible means, giving up all conflicts of the scriptures; one should take refuge in the Guru. (103)

तत्वमस्यादिवाक्यानामुपदेष्टा तु पार्वति |
कारणाख्यो गुरुः प्रोक्तो भवरोगनिवारकः ||

The Guru who initiates the disciple into Mahavakya, Tattvamasi (Thou are that) etc. O Parvati, he is called the Karanakhya Guru. He is the remover of the disease of this mundane world. (171)

गुरुनिन्दाकरं दृष्ट्वा धावयेदथ वासयेत् |
स्थानं वा तत्परित्याज्यं जिह्वाच्छेदाक्षमो यदि ||

On seeing a person speaking ill of the Guru, if one is not able to cut his tongue, one should drive out that person from that place. If the person lives there, then one should leave that place. (72)

Glories of Param Guru

मोहादिरहितः शान्तो नित्यतृप्तो निराश्रयः |
तृणीकृतब्रह्मविष्णुवैभवः परमो गुरुः ||

A Param Guru is free from attachment, etc; peaceful, always contented in Himself, independent, and one who considers the status of Brahma and Vishnu like a blade of grass. (180)

सर्वकालविदेशेषु स्वतंत्रो निश्चलस्सुखी |
अखण्डैकरसास्वादतृप्तो हि परमो गुरुः ||

One who is independent at all times and places, who possess an unshakable mind and always blissful, who experiences the homogenous essence of the Self, such a one is the Param Guru. (181)

द्वैताद्वैतविनिर्मुक्तः स्वानुभूतिप्रकाशवान् |

अज्ञानान्धमश्छेत्ता सर्वज्ञ परमो गुरुः ||

One who is free from the feeling of duality and non-duality, who shines by the light of His self-realization, who is able to destroy the deep darkness of ignorance, and is omniscient, He is a Param Guru. (182)

यस्य दर्शनमात्रेण मनसः स्यात् प्रसन्नता |
स्वयं भूयात् धृतिश्शान्तिः स भवेत् परमो गुरुः ||

By whose mere Darshan (look with devotion), one attains calmness, cheerfulness, and peace and steadfastness, and peace of mind, such a one is Param Guru. (183)

स्वशरीरं शवं पश्यन् तथा स्वात्मानमद्वयम् |
यः स्त्रीकनकमोहघ्नः स भवेत् परमो गुरुः ||

One who looks upon his own body as a corpse, and his Self as the non-dual Brahman, and who has killed the infatuation for wealth and women, such a person is a Param Guru. (184)

Guru is above Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva

गुरोः कृपाप्रसादेन ब्रह्मविष्णुशिवादयः |
सामर्थ्यमभजन् सर्वे सृष्टिस्थित्यंतकर्मणि ||

It is by the Guru's grace and blessings that Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva become capable of performing their respective duties- creation, preservation, and dissolution. (213)

Fruitlessness of sadhana done without the knowledge of Self

स्वरूपज्ञानशून्येन कृतमप्यकृतं भवेत् |
तपो जपादिकं देवि सकलं बालजल्पवत् ||

Without the Knowledge of the Self whatever Sadhana is done is fruitless. O Devi, penances,japas, etc., everything becomes like the prattling of a child. (190)

Shiva, Shakti and Guru are one and same says Guru Gita

मम् रूपासि देवि त्वमतस्तत्कथयामि ते |

लोकोपकारकः प्रश्नो न केनापि कृतः पुरा ||

O Devi, you are my own Self in another form. Therefore I shall narrate this to you. This question of yours will benefit the whole world. No one else has put me this question. (16)

यो गुरु स शिवः प्रोक्तो, यः शिवः स गुरुस्मृतः |
विकल्पं यस्तु कुर्वीत स नरो गुरुतल्पगः ||

He who is the Guru is Shiva Himself, so declare the scriptures, and the fact that Shiva is the Guru, is reminded to us in all the Smritis. He, who makes any distinction between the two, is guilty of the crime of uniting with his own Guru's wife. (18)

You will find many such verses in Guru Gita that are of Advaita Origin.

Sri Ramakrishna says, Bhakta, Bhagavan and Bhagavat are one and the same.

Similarly other lesser known Gita's like Rama Gita, Hanumad Gita, Avadhut Gita and Ribhu Gita also talk about supreme Nirguna Brahman.

Yogvasistha and Ashtavakra Gita also talk about Advait and Ajaat vaad (ajati vad)

Advaita in Ribhu Gita

26. If there is duality, there is (a concept of) nonduality; in the absence of duality, there is no (concept of) nonduality either. If there is something to be "seen," a seer is also there; in the absence of anything to see, there is no seer at all either.

27. If there is an interior, there surely is an exterior; if there be no interior, there is also no exterior. If there be (a concept of) completeness, it implies something of incompleteness.

28. If there is a little that can be thought of, it becomes all in no time; if there is not a little--nothing whatsoever of anything at anytime--nothing arises.

29. Therefore, all this does not exist in the least at any time: neither you nor I, neither this nor that. There being only Brahman alone, be of the certitude that there is no non-Self.

Note: Please note that the knowledge referred in an shastras when they are talking about rise above knowledge and ignorance means scriptural knowledge. Hence any such statements like rise beyond duality of knowledge-ignorance, duality-non-duality, etc has to be taken from vyavahaarika (practical) standpoint. The aim is to meditate and realize and not just be contented with the knowledge (information) obtained from scriptures. After certain maturity, when one obtains dhyeya siddhi, one has to just meditate to reach the ultimate state. Shastras and their study has to be dropped, as shastras are just pointers. Having essence of shastras, they are of no more use. Purpose of shastras is fulfilled. Hence they are supposed to be dropped, as they are also aavalamban (support). It means not by mearing scriptures, but by meditating one can rise above duality and enter into infinite non-dual brahman.

These upadeshas are only for matured sadhakas, who have experienced detachment, can live with bare minimum necessities and whose mind does not go in samsaara i.e. it's 100 % introvert. These Upadeshas are not for common masses and beginners. Hence these type of upadeshas are not popular to public. This is the reason why Gita's such as Ribhu Gita, Ashtavakra Gita and Yoga Vasistha are less popular.

For more verses in Ribhu Gita, please visit Brahman / Atman is not Shunya says Ribhu Gita

To know what is Ribhu Gita, please visit wiki and Sivanandaonline.

Caution: Ribhu Gita is not for the masses.

Advaita in Other Gitas

Following are external links dedicated to Advaita

Advaita in Avadhuta (Avadhoot) Gita

Avadhuta Gita

Avadhuta Gita contains many verses of Advaita origin.

Caution: Avadhuta Gita is not for the masses.

1. By the grace of God the Brahmins above all men are inspired with the disposition to non-duality (unity of the Self with God), which relieves them of the great fear.

2. How can I salute the Self, which is indestructible, which is all Bliss, which in Itself and by Itself pervades everything, and which is inseparable from Itself?

3. I alone am, ever free from all taint. The world exists like a mirage within me. To whom shall I bow?

4. Verily the one Self is all, free from differentiation and non-differentiation. Neither can it be said, "It is" nor "It is not." What a great mystery.

5. This is the whole substance of Vedanta; this is the essence of all knowledge, theoretical and intuitional. I am the Atman, by nature impersonal and all-pervasive.

6. That God who is the Self in all, impersonal and changeless, like unto space, by nature purity itself, verily, verily, that I am.

7. I am pure knowledge, imperishable, infinite. I know neither joy nor pain; whom can they touch?

Advaita in Sri Rama Gita also called as sruti-sara-sangraha

[Updated on 18-Apr-2022]

[Under Construction]

Link 1, Link 2

SrI rAma gItA consists of 62 slokas and is known as Sruti-sAra-sangraha. It is of advaitic nature.

SrI rAma gItA is the discource between BhagavAna rAma and LakshmaNa. When Maa sItA was renounced by SrI rAmA and sent to forest while she was pregnant. LakshmaNa was entrusted with task to leave her in the forest near the Ashrama of maharShi vAlmiki. With heay heart lakshmaNa did the job but while returning back, his heart was filled with dejection and he was in pain and couldn't understand why SrI rAma did this and wanted to find a solution to get out of this pain. With heavy heart he approached SrI rAma and explained his mental state and confusion. SrI rAma then expounded his true nature as formless Self of all and gave him instructions on how to be free from pain and suffering. The 62 slokas are essence of the upanishads and it is rightly called as shruti-sAra-samgraha

Following Slokas describe Advaita in SrI rAma gItA

9, 18, 19, 25, 27, 30, 31, 32, 34, 35, 36, 37, (40, 41 – what is Jiva), 43, 45, (46 – how one should meditate), 47- advaita sthiti, (48, 49, 51, 52, 53, – OM), (55, 56 – Paramatma as Self), 61 – saguna and nirguna both lead to same State

In free time, I will update the relevant slokas.

[/Under Construction]

Advaita in Hanumad Gita

"Dear son Hanuman, look at me. I am so pleased with you that I would like to introduce you to ourselves. Listen, Sri Rama is beginning less, endless, eternal, and imperishable. He is inconceivable and indescribable. He is beyond the reach of thought and action."

Hanumanji looked up and began constantly looking humbly to Sitaji as a child looks at his mother when she is teaching him some important point of life.

"Death, misunderstanding and afflictions do not reach my husband. Therefore, he is indicated as Satchidanandamaya.

"He is motionless, doing nothing he just exists. All that is attributed to him as though he did it are all my creations. They are my performances. Even his appearance in this form has taken place because of me. I am the Yoga Maya.

"I am not outside him. His existence is not possible without me. I am his eternal power. Appearance of this phenomenal world is my luxury, my pleasure. Millions and billions of cosmic universes emanate from me. I am the giver of birth and all creation, the preserver and the nourisher of all good creation, and destroyer of karma, existence and worn out life in them all. The appearance of this mundane world is a vibration in power. And that power I am, as well as the very vibrations themselves. And I am the power of this Sri Rama. Completely non-different from him.

"Imposed by me, upon this Lord of my heart, the Truth, consciousness, and bliss reflect back upon me and I shine as sandhini, samvit, and lhadini. Again, these are potencies of the Lord of mine. Through vibrations of these reflections, I introduce the transcendental worlds of Saketa, Goloka, Vaikuntha, and so on. When the rays of their dazzle travel far below, enveloped by my gross power, they transform as satva, rajas, and tamas. From these comes forth the world. Thus the entire visible, imaginable, conceivable world is my sporty adventure.

"But, I've no meaning of me for myself at all, except his love. I have no purpose to exist at all unless and until or as long as this, my beloved, keeps looking at me. The purpose of my existence is to entertain him. I am alive, in appearance only as long as my lord needs me. As soon as he no longer needs me, I submerge into him. I become one with him." Sitaji said and became quiet.

source

Advaita in Shiva Gita from Padma Purana

Shiva Gita is a part of Padma Purana, which is a discourse between Bhagavan Rama as disciple and Bhagavan Shiva as Guru, who is none other than Brahman. If one remembers, it is the same purana from which a verse is taken to defame Advaita and Adi Shankara. So if Padma Purana is authentic, so is Shiva Gita

Also note that Shiva shows the virATa svarupa to Rama after giving Rama the divine eyes. Shiva showed both duality and non-duality. Shiva is a person (personal deity), creator, preserver and destroyer) and is also NirGuna Brahman. Shiva-tatva i.e. Brahman after associating with mAyA becomes Ishwara.

Please visit the link here. Please refer slokas: 24-25, 29-40

Some verses:

Dvaita: Shiva as a person

Great things do not rest on flimsy support. One single atom cannot support the Vindhyā mountains. This universe rests on Your person through Your māyā alone. I am convinced now about this. 27

Brahman + mAyA, illusionary power of God = Ishwara, lord of the universe.

Just as a fear-causing snake appearing in the rope has not really come into being, nor exists, nor undergoes destruction, similarly is the universe too taking shape in You, through that sheer māyā of Yours, O Nilakaṇṭha. 28

When it is enquired as to Your body assuming the nature of being, the very basis for the world of manifestation, that itself is seen to be certainly due to my ignorance. Thou art wholly the nature of Consciousness and Bliss. 29

Jagat is Brahma svarupa: Sarvam khalu-idam brahma

O Destroyer of Tripura, Thou alone, being praised, bestow upon the enjoyers the fruits of the eminently meritorious acts, performance of Vedic sacrifices and charitable acts. But even this statement is not fully true because there is nothing different from You at all. 30

Thinking of formless God is difficult

The Sages declare those as deluded by ignorance who mistakenly think that Śiva, Lord of the Himālayas, is pleased by external acts of worship and services. How can there be any desire for pleasure for one who is formless? 31

Even fruits of karma are nothing but illusion, as they are all inside mAyA

O Supreme Lord! Even the sovereignty of all the three worlds, You bestow as a reward on those people who offer You a leaf or a little water. I deem it all as the work of ignorance. 32

Jnana-svarupa Atman / Brahman does not die

You pervade all the quarters and the intermediate directions. Thou art the universe, secondless, the infinite and the eternal. Even when this universe become extinct, there is no loss to You, just as there is no detriment to space (within a pot), when the pot is broken. 33

Same Brahman gives light (power) to many minds and mind reflects it as if it it thy own

Just as the one, single Sun in the sky gets its many reflections in various vessels of water, so Thou, O Lord, art (variously) reflected in different minds. 34

The same is said in Sri Ramana Maharshi's 40 verses on reality

22. Atman gives light to the mind and shines within it. Except by turning the mind inward and fixing it in the Divine, there is no other way to know Him through the mind.

6. The world is nothing more than an embodiment of the objects perceived by the five sense-organs. Since, through these five sense-organs, a single mind perceives the world, the world is nothing but the mind. Apart from the mind can there be a world?

Everything including heaven is a dream

There is nothing to be done by You even when the world is created, protected and dissolved. Even then, You bestow heaven etc. on the souls beginninglessly embodied according to their mortal fruits. It all happens as in a dream. 35

Experience is because we are conscious. Consciousness is nothing but Self

O Śambhu! For the two inert bodies, the subtle (sūkṣma) and the gross (sthūla) there

could be no consciousness without the Self. Therefore, the scriptures, O enemy of Tripura, speak of pleasure and pain experienced through Your reflection in them. 36

Unity of Dvaita and Advaita

Prostrations to Thee, O Swan in the ocean of Existence and Consciousness; prostrations to Thee, O Blue-Throated One, the very form of Time; prostrations to Thee, the Destroyer of all sins; prostrations to Thee, the one (witness) experiencer of the functions of the mind, which after all is illusory. 37

Shiva Gita ends with the verse which says, Shiva Gita imparts Brahma-vidya

Thus ends the seventh chapter called the Vision of the Cosmic Form in the form of a dialogue between Śiva and Rāma in the Śiva-Gītā an upaniṣad delivering Brahma-vidyā, and a yoga śāstra occurring in the Padma Purāṇa.

Likewise, Chapter 10, jiva-swarupa kathan deals with jiva-brahma aikya i.e. Jiva and Brahman are one and the same. Chapter 10 consists of 63 slokas.

Advaita in Uttara Gita

Uttara Gita Lord Krishna's second discourse to Arjuna, Initiation of Arjuna into Yoga and Jnana

5. He is called Brahman, who, devoid of all desires, and by the process of Yoga, sits in that state of meditation in which he assimilates his own Self-mantra (Pranava or Aum) with the Hamsa (Paramatma).

6. For the human being, the attainment of the state of Hamsa (I am He), within his own limits, is considered the highest jnana. That which remains merely a passive witness between the Hamsa and Non-Hamsa, i.e., the Paramatman and the destructible portion of the human being, is the Aksara Purusa in the form of Kutasha-Caitanya (Atma-Buddhi). **When the knower finds and sees this Akara Purusa in him, he is saved from all future troubles of birth and death in this world.**

7. The word "Kakin" is the compound of ka + aka + in. The first syllable Ka means happiness, the second Aka means misery, and the third In denotes possessing: therefore one that possesses happiness and misery – the Jiva – is called "Kakin". Again the vowel a at the end of the syllable Ka is the conscious manifestation of

Mula-Prakrti or the Jiva form of the Brahman; therefore when this a disappears, there remains only the K, which is the One great indivisible Bliss – Brahman.

10. Such a seeker of Brahman, after fixing his mind as aforesaid, and shutting himself out of all objective knowledge (Ajnana), should hold fast the support of unchangeable Jnana, and think of the One Indivisible Brahman in the inner and outer Akasa, that exists at the end of the nose, and into which the life-breath merges.

11. Freed from both nostrils where the life-breath disappears, there (i.e., in the heart) fix thy mind, O Partha, [another name of Arjuna.] and meditate upon the All-Supreme Isvara.

12. Think of the Siva, there, as devoid of all conditions of life, pure but without lustre (Prabha), mindless, Buddhi-less.

13. The signs of Samadhi are the negation of all positive conditions of life and the complete enthralment or subjugation of all objective thoughts.

14. Although the body of the meditator may now and hen become somewhat unsteady at the time of meditation, yet he is to consider that the Paramatma is immovable. This is the sign of the Samadhi.

15. He that considers the Paramatman as without Matra, i.e., neither short nor long in metre, soundless, unconnected with vowels, and beyond the Bindu, (Point) i.e., Anusvara, (which produces a nasal sound), beyond the Nada, i.e., the voice that rises from the throat, etc., and beyond the Kalas, i.e., the different phases of this sound, is the real knower of the Vedas.

16. He that has acquired Vijnana, (the Supreme Knowledge) by the aid of Jnana, i.e.., the knowledge derived from books of Philosophy and instruction from a Guru, and has learned to place the object of this knowledge in his heart, and he that has acquired peace of mind, such a person requires no Yoga for further practice, and no meditation for further conception.

17. The syllable (Aum) with which the Vedas begin, which figures in the middle of the Vedas, and with which the Vedas end, unites Prakrti with its Own Self; but that which is beyond this Prakrti-united-Pranava is Mahesvara.

18. A boat is necessary until one gets to the other side of the river, but when a man once crosses the stream, the boat is no longer necessary for his purpose.

19. As a husbandman throws away the husks, after thrashing out the corn, so does also an intelligent person give up the study of books after he has attained knowledge from them.

33. He that contemplates the Atman as No-thing above, No-thing below, No-thing in the middle, and No-thing all round, his state is called the state of Samadhi. (That is Niralamba, non-supported or self-supported samadhi) The Yogi who thus realizes the No-thingness of the Atman becomes free from all virtues and vice.

ARJUNA ASKED:

34. Tell me, O Kesava, how Yogis should meditate upon the colourless and formless Brahman, when the mind is unable to think upon that which it has never seen, and that which can be seen is material, and consequently subject to destruction (change)?

SRI BHAGAVAN SAID:

35. That which is full above, full below, full in the middle, and full all round, is the All-full Atman and he that contemplates the Atman thus, is said to be in the state of Samadhi.

ARJUNA ASKED:

36. Tell me, O Kesava, how the Yogi is to practise meditation when the Salamba which thou has just described is unreal and that which is Niralamba means No-thingness?

SRI BHAGAVAN SAID:

37. He who, after purifying his mind, contemplates the pure Paramatman, and looks unto his own Self as he one vast undivided whole of the manifested universe, becomes happy by knowing the Brahman.

SRI BHAGAVAN SAID:

47. O Arjuna, the Akasa is called Sunya (vacuum), because it means the want or absence of things or anything. This Akasa has the quality of Sound, but that which gives it the power of Sound (as emptiness cannot produce any sound), thought Itself Soundless, is the unknown and unknowable Brahman.

ARJUNA ASKED:

50. Tell me, O Krishna, how, by closing their external senses and knowing that Brahman, which lies concealed in every matter and every substance, the Yogins realize Nirvana Mukti (i.e., absolute freedom from every kind of bondage)?

SRI BHAGAVAN SAID:

51. The Yogins see the Atman within (them: this they do) when they shut out all their external senses (not by any physical action); for such a person when he leaves his body, his Buddhi [Students must distinguish between the Vedantic use of this term and the significance assigned to it in the Esoteric Philosophy.] (i.e. material intelligence) dies away, and with the death of his Buddhi his ignorance also dies away (i.e., he becomes spiritual).

52. As long as the Tattvas are not known to a person, so long it is necessary for him to practise concentration of mind by shutting out external senses, but once the thoroughly attains the knowledge of the Tattvas he identifies himself with the Universal Soul.

53. From the nine openings (portals) of the body, the waters of knowledge always pass out; consequently one cannot know the Brahman unless he becomes as pure as the Brahman Itself. (Meaning, the powers of mind should be concentrated within, and not allowed to dwell upon external objects through the nine openings.)

54. Thy body itself is exceedingly impure, but that which takes a body (Jivatman) is purity itself; he that has known the difference of the real nature of these two never troubles himself with the question of purity; for, whose purity, should he search after? (The Jivatman is always pure.)

CHAPTER-II

ARJUNA ASKED:

1. Tell me, O Keshava, what is the evidence when one, knowing the Brahman as the all-pervading and all-knowing Paramesvara, believes himself to be one with It?

SRI BHAGAVAN SAID:

2. As water in water, milk in milk and (clarified) butter in butter, so the Jivatman and Paramatman become one in union without any distinction and difference.

3. He who with undivided attention endeavours to unite the Jivatman with the Paramatman according to the manner prescribed by the Sastras (i.e., Rsis) to him the all-pervading and universal Light shows itself in due time.

ARJUNA ASKED:

4. When, by acquiring knowledge, the knower becomes the object of knowledge itself, then he frees himself from all bondage by the virtue of his knowledge, and what need is there for practice of Yoga or meditation?

SRI BHAGAVAN SAID:

5. He, in whom the light of knowledge always shines forth, has his Buddhi constantly fixed on the Brahman, and with the fire of supreme knowledge he is able to burn down the bonds of Karma.

6. Such a knower of the Tattvas, by the realization of the Paramatman that is pure as the spotless Akasa and without a second, lives in it (i.e., Paramatman) without any Upadhi (i.e., being free from all attributes), as water enters into water.

7. Atman is Suksma like Akasa , and therefore it cannot be seen by the eyes, nor can the inner Atman, which is like the Vayu (air) bee seen either; but he who has been able to fix his Inner-Atman by the Niralamba Samadhi, and has learned to direct the course of his external senses inward, can know the unity of the Atman and Antaratman (Inner Soul or Mind).

8. Wherever a Jnanin may die, and in whatever manner his death may happen, he becomes one with Atman when he leases his body, even as the Akasa in the pot becomes one with its parent Akasa when the pot is broken, matters not where nor how it breaks.

9. Know by the process of Anvaya and Vyatireka that the **Atman which pervades the whole body is beyond the the three states of consciousness – waking, dreaming and dreamless sleep.**

34. The Yogins who contemplate me with one mind as "I am he" are saved from the sins collected during a hundred millions of Kalpas.

35. As the Akasa of the pot is absorbed in the Mahakasa when the pot is broken, so also the ignorance-bound Jivatman is absorbed in the Paramatman when ignorance is destroyed.

36. He who has been able to acquire the knowledge of the Tattvas that the Jivatman is absorbed in the Paramatman, even as the Akasa of the Pot is absorbed in the Mahakasa, becomes undoubtedly free from the chain of ignorance, and goes into the sphere of the Light of Supreme Knowledge and Wisdom.

37. If a man practise asceticism and severe austerity for a thousand years, standing on one leg only, he cannot realize one-sixteenth part of the benefit gained by Dhyana Yoga (meditation).

39. At the time when the body oscillates backward and forward, the Braahmana who hesitates to believe that he is Brahman fails to understand the great subtle Atman, even if he be conversant with the four Vedas.

There are many verses, from Yoga standpoint, which state that Attributeless Brahman is supreme and the last state is non-duality. It also teaches that Jiva merges with Brahman, Atman and becomes one with it.

Source

Chapter III teaches Jiva-Brahma Aikya

Advaita in Anu Gita

Anu Gita Refreshes Teachings of Vedas and Upanishads. It talks about Yog and meditation, final union of Jiva and Brahman

Chapter 4

He who becoming placid, and thinking of naught, may become absorbed in the one receptacle, abandoning each previous (element), he will cross beyond (all) bonds. A man who is a friend of all, who endures all, who is devoted to tranquility, who has subdued his senses, and from whom fear and wrath have departed, and who is self-possessed, is released. He who moves among all beings as if they were like himself, who is self-controlled, pure, free from vanity and egoism, he is, indeed, released from everything. And he, too, is released who is equable towards both life and death, and likewise pleasure and pain, and gain and loss, and (what is) agreeable and odious. He who is not attached to any one, who contemns no one, who is free from the pairs of opposites, and whose self is free from affections, he is, indeed, released in every way. **He who has no enemy, who has no kinsmen, who has no child, who has abandoned piety, wealth, and lust altogether, and who has no desire, is released.** He who is not pious and not impious, who casts off (the merit or sin) previously accumulated, whose self is tranquillized by the exhaustion of the primary elements of the body, and who is free from the pairs of opposites, is released. **One who does no action, and who has no desire, looks on this universe as transient, like an Aswattha tree, always full of birth, death., and old age. Having his understanding always (fixed) upon indifference to worldly objects, searching for his own faults, he procures the release of his self from bonds in no long time.**

Seeing the self void of smell, void of taste, void of touch, void of sound, void of belongings, void of color, and unknowable, he is released. He who sees the enjoyer of the qualities, devoid of qualities, devoid of the qualities of the five elements, devoid of form, and having no cause, is released. Abandoning by the understanding all fancies bodily and mental, he gradually obtains tranquility, like fire devoid of fuel. He who is free from all impressions, free from the pairs of opposites, without belongings, and who moves among the collection of organs with penance, he is indeed released. Then freed from all impressions, he attains to the eternal Supreme Brahman, tranquil, unmoving, constant,

indestructible. After this I shall explain the science of concentration of mind, than which there is nothing higher, (and which teaches) how devotees concentrating (their minds) perceive the perfect self. I will impart instruction regarding it accurately. Learn from me the paths by which one directing the self within the self perceives the eternal (principle). **Restraining the senses, one should fix the mind on the self; and having first performed rigorous penance, he should practice concentration of mind for final emancipation.** Then the talented Brâhmana, who has practiced penance, who is constantly practicing concentration of mind, should act on (the precepts of) the science of concentration of mind, seeing the self in the self by means of the mind. If such a good man is able to concentrate the self on the self, then he, being habituated to exclusive meditation, perceives the self in the self.

Being self-restrained and self-possessed, and always concentrating his mind, and having his senses subjugated, he who has achieved proper concentration of mind sees the self in the self, As a person having seen one in a dream, recognizes him (afterwards), saying, 'This is he;' so does one who has achieved proper concentration of mind perceive the self. And as one may show the soft fibers, after extracting them from the Muñga, so does a devotee see the self extracted from the body. The body is called the Muñga; the soft fibers stand for the self. This is the excellent illustration propounded by those who understand concentration of mind. **When an embodied (self) properly perceives the self concentrated, then there is no ruler over him, since he is the lord of the triple world.** He obtains various bodies as he pleases; and casting aside old age and death, he grieves not and exults not. **The man who has acquired concentration of mind, and who is self-restrained, creates for himself even the divinity of the gods; and abandoning the transient body, he attains to the inexhaustible Brahman.**

When (all) beings are destroyed, he has no fear; when (all) beings are afflicted, he is not afflicted by anything. He whose self is concentrated, who is free from attachment, and of a tranquil mind, is not shaken by the fearful effects of attachment and affection, which consist in pain and grief. Weapons do not pierce him; there is, no death for him; nothing can be seen anywhere in the world happier than he. **Properly concentrating his self, he remains steady to the self; and freed from old age and grief, he sleeps at ease. Leaving this human frame, he assumes bodies at pleasure.** But one who is practicing concentration should never become despondent. **When one who has properly achieved concentration perceives the self in the self, then he forthwith ceases to feel any attachment to Indra himself.**

Final Emancipation (Liberation):

Being thus always assiduous and pleased in the self, he attains in a short time to that Brahman, after perceiving which he understands the Pradhâna. He is not to be grasped by the eye, nor by any of the senses. Only by the mind (used) as a lamp is the great self perceived. He has hands and feet on all sides; he has eyes, heads, and faces on all sides; he has cars on all sides; he stands pervading everything in the world. The soul sees the self come out from the body; and abandoning his body, he perceives the self,–holding it to be the immaculate Brahman,–with, as it were, a mental smile. And then depending upon it thus, he attains final emancipation in me.

This whole mystery I have declared to you, O best of Brâhmanas! I will now take my leave, I will go away; and do you (too) go away, O Brâhmana! according to your pleasure.' Thus addressed by me, O Krishna! that pupil, possessed of great penance,–that Brâhmana of rigid vows,–went away as he pleased.

Source:

Advaita in Uddhava Gita

Uddhava Gita is the Final Teachings of Lord Krishna to his faithful disciple Uddhava.

47. Naked sages who seriously endeavor in spiritual practice, who have raised their semen upward, who are peaceful and sinless members of the renounced order, attain the spiritual abode called Brahman.

6. Now you should completely give up all attachment to your personal friends and relatives and fix your mind on Me. Thus being always conscious of Me, you should observe all things with equal vision and wander throughout the earth.

7. My dear Uddhava, the material universe that you perceive through your mind, speech, eyes, ears and other senses is an illusory creation that one imagines to be real due to the influence of maya. In fact, you should know that all of the objects of the material senses are temporary.

8. One whose consciousness is bewildered by illusion perceives many differences in value and meaning among material objects. Thus one engages constantly on the platform of material good and evil and is bound by such conceptions. Absorbed in material duality, such a person contemplates the performance of compulsory duties, nonperformance of such duties and performance of forbidden activities.

10. Being fully endowed with conclusive knowledge of the Vedas and having realized the ultimate purpose of such knowledge in practice, you will be able to perceive the pure self, and thus your mind will be satisfied. At that time you will become dear to all living beings, headed by the demigods, and you will never be hampered by any disturbance in life.

11. One who has transcended material good and evil automatically acts in accordance with religious injunctions and avoids forbidden activities. The self-realized person does this spontaneously, like an innocent child, and not because he is thinking in terms of material good and evil.

Source: http://www.astrojyoti.com/bhagavatam11b-2.htm

Chapter 27 - Lord Krsna's Instructions on the Process of Deity Worship

1. Sri Uddhava said: My dear Lord, O master of the devotees, please explain to me the prescribed method of worshiping You in Your Deity form. What are the qualifications of those devotees who worship the Deity, on what basis is such worship established, and what is the specific method of worship?

2. All the great sages repeatedly declare that such worship brings the greatest benefit possible in human life. This is the opinion of Narada Muni, the great Vyasadeva and my own spiritual master, Brhaspati.

5. O lotus-eyed one, O Supreme Lord of all lords of the universe, please explain to Your devoted servant this means of liberation from the bondage of work.

Chapter Twenty-Eight Jnana-yoga

1. The Supreme Personality of Godhead said: One should neither praise nor criticize the conditioned nature and activities of other persons. Rather, one should see this world as simply the combination of material nature and the enjoying souls, all based on the one Absolute Truth.

2. Whoever indulges in praising or criticizing the qualities and behavior of others will quickly become deviated from his own best interest by his entanglement in illusory dualities.

3. Just as the embodied spirit soul loses external consciousness when his senses are overcome by the illusion of dreaming or the deathlike state of deep sleep, so a person experiencing material duality must encounter illusion and death.

4. That which is expressed by material words or meditated upon by the material mind is not ultimate truth. What, therefore, is actually good or bad within this insubstantial world of duality, and how can the extent of such good and bad be measured?

8. One who has properly understood the process of becoming firmly fixed in theoretical and realized knowledge, as described herein by Me, does not indulge in material criticism or praise. Like the sun, he wanders freely throughout this world.

9. By direct perception, logical deduction, scriptural testimony and personal realization, one should know that this world has a beginning and an end and so is not the ultimate reality. Thus one should live in this world without attachment.

10. Sri Uddhava said: My dear Lord, it is not possible for this material existence to be the experience of either the soul, who is the seer, or of the body, which is the seen object. On the one hand, the spirit soul is innately endowed with perfect knowledge, and on the other

hand, the material body is not a conscious, living entity. To whom, then, does this experience of material existence pertain?

11. The spirit soul is inexhaustible, transcendental, pure, self-luminous and never covered by anything material. It is like fire. But the nonliving material body, like firewood, is dull and unaware. So in this world, who is it that actually undergoes the experience of material life?

19. Gold alone is present before its manufacture into gold products, the gold alone remains after the products' destruction, and the gold alone is the essential reality while it is being utilized under various designations. Similarly, I alone exist before the creation of this universe, after its destruction and during its maintenance.

20. The material mind manifests in three phases of consciousness—wakefulness, sleep and deep sleep—which are products of the three modes of nature. The mind further appears in three different roles—the perceiver, the perceived and the regulator of perception. Thus the mind is manifested variously throughout these threefold designations. But it is the fourth factor, existing separately from all this, that alone constitutes the Absolute Truth.

21. That which did not exist in the past and will not exist in the future also has no existence of its own for the period of its duration, but is only a superficial designation. In My opinion, whatever is created and revealed by something else is ultimately only that other thing.

Note: It is interesting to note that Uttara Gita, Anu Gita and Uddhav Gita are a part of Srimad Bhagavatam

Advaita in AdhyAtma rAmAyaNa and tArA gItA

AdhyAtma rAmAyaNa is a discourse between rAma and laxmaNa

vikalpa mAyArahitE chidAtmakE *ahaMkAra* Esha prathamaH prakalpitaH

adhyAsa EvAtmani sarvakAraNE nirAmayE brahmaNi kEvalE parE

The brahma vastu is free from all the vikalpAs and mAyA. It is of the form of *chit*. **The prathama-prakalpa in the form of *ahaM* which is superimposed on this vikalpa-rahita (changeless) brahma vastu is called *adhyAsa***. And all this tamAsha (drama) is being displayed by this ahaM only.

In AdhyAtma rAmAyaNa shrI rAma says that this world is and illusion and is seen because of eho only. The only truth is the supreme (param) nirAkAra brahman (nirAmayE brahmaNi kEvalE parE), which free from delusion.

source

tArA gItA

mithyAropitasaMsAro na svayaM vinivartate |
viShayA dhyAyamAnasya svapne mithyAgamo yathA ||

This saMsAra is falsely superimposed (on the Self) and does not go away on its own for a person who broods over the objects of the senses. This samsAra is just like a dream which too does not end on its own (but ends when one wakes up.)

anAdyavidyAsaMbandhAttatkAryAhaMkR^itestathA |
saMsAro .apArthako .api syAdrAgadveShAdisaN^kulaH ||

By the relation (association) with beginningless avidyA (ajnAna, ignorance) and with the effect of avidyA - ahaMkAra (ego), the saMsAra, characterized by attractions and aversions, exists even though it is meaningless.

Source, Further reading

Advaita and Ajaata Vaad in Ashtavakra Gita

Chapter 1

9. Burn down the forest of ignorance with the fire of understanding. Know 'I am the one pure awareness.' With such ashes now be happy, free from distress.

10. That in which all this appears is but imagined like the snake in a rope; that joy, supreme knowledge and awareness is what you are; now be happy.

12. Your real nature is one perfect, free, and actionless consciousness, the all-pervading witness – unattached to anything, desireless, at peace. It is illusion that you seem to be involved in any other matter.

13. Meditate on yourself as motionless awareness, free from any dualism, giving up the mistaken idea that you are just a derivative consciousness; anything external or internal is false.

15. You are really unbound and actionless, self-illuminating and spotless already. The cause of your bondage is that you are still resorting to stilling the mind.

16. All of this is really filled by you and strung out in you, for what you consist of is pure awareness – so don't be small-minded.

17. You are unconditioned and changeless, formless and immovable, unfathomable awareness, imperturbable- such consciousness is unclinging.

18. Recognise that the apparent is unreal, while the unmanifest is abiding. Through this initiation into truth you will escape falling into unreality again.

19. Just as a mirror exists as part and apart from its reflected images, so the Supreme Lord exists as part and apart from this body.

20. Just as one and the same all-pervading space exists within and without a jar, so the eternal, everlasting Being exists in the totality of things.

Chapter 2

Janaka said:

1. Truly I am spotless and at peace, the awareness beyond natural causality. All this time I have been afflicted by delusion.

2. As I alone give light to this body, so do I enlighten the world. As a result the whole world is mine, and, alternatively, nothing is.

3. So now abandoning the body and everything else, suddenly somehow my true self becomes apparent.

4. Just as waves, foam and bubbles are not different from water, so all this which has emanated from oneself, is no other than oneself.

5. Just as cloth when examined is found to be just thread, so when all this is analysed it is found to be no other than oneself.

6. Just as the sugar produced from the juice of the sugarcane is permeated with the same taste, so all this, produced out of me, is completely permeated with me.

7. From ignorance of oneself, the world appears, and by knowledge of oneself it appears no longer. From ignorance of the rope a snake appears, and by knowledge of the rope the snake appears no longer.

8. Shining is my essential nature, and I am nothing over and beyond that. When the world shines forth, it is simply me that is shining forth.

9. All this appears in me, imagined, due to ignorance, just as a snake appears in the rope, just as the mirage of water in the sunlight, and just as silver in mother of pearl.

Glory to Thy Self

11. How wonderful I am! Glory to me, for whom there is no destruction, remaining even beyond the destruction of the world from Brahma down to the last blade of grass.

12. How wonderful I am! Glory to me, solitary! Even though with a body, I am neither going or coming anywhere; I abide forever, filling all that is.

13. How wonderful I am! Glory to me! There is no one so clever as me! I have borne all that is, forever, without even touching it with my body!

14. How wonderful I am! Glory to me! I possess nothing at all, and alternatively possess everything to which speech and mind can refer.

Caution: Ashtavakra Gita is not for the masses. Many people after reading Ashtavakra Gita have stopped practicing Meditation, rituals, yagna, stopped visiting temples.

Advaita in Yoga Vasistha

Yog Vasistha or Vasistha Gita is the discourse between Lord Ram and his Guru Vasistha. It is of advaita nature.

Yog Vasistha Sara can be found here

Caution: Yoga Vasistha is not for the masses.

Some verses from Yog Vasistha sara:

Chapter One

Dispassion

1. Salutations to that calm effulgence which is endless and unlimited by space, time etc., the pure consciousness which can be known by experience only.

5. The great remedy for the long-lasting disease of samsara is the enquiry, 'Who am I?, to whom does this samsara belong?,' which entirely cures it.

Purport of sacred texts

10. That which is imparted, O good soul, to a worthy disciple who has become dispassionate, is the real wisdom; it is the real purport of the sacred texts and is also the comprehensive wisdom.

11. Following the customary method of teaching is only for preserving the tradition. Pure awareness results solely from the clarity of the disciple's understanding.

12. The Lord cannot be seen with the help of the sacred texts or the Guru. The self is seen by the Self alone with the pure intellect.

Samadhi is thoughtlessness

17. Even the slightest thought immerses a man in sorrow; when devoid of all thoughts he enjoys imperishable bliss.

Everything is a dream

18. Just as we experience the delusion of hundreds of years in a dream lasting an hour, so also we experience the sport of maya in our waking state.

Self does not die or is not shunya

21. On the dissolution of the body, the ether (consciousness) limited by the heart (hridayam) alone ceases to exist. People lament needlessly that the Self is extinct.

Jiva-Brahma-aikya: Jiva and Brahman are one and are not different

22. When pots, etc. are broken the space within them becomes unlimited. So also when bodies cease to exist the Self remains eternal and unattached.

Jagat in reality is brahman itself

23. Nothing whatever is born or dies anywhere at any time. It is Brahman alone appearing illusory in the form of the world.

Note: The jagat is satya, but not the way we see it. It is not other than Brahman. Similarly the body of Brahman is Brahman itself, eye of Brahman is Brahman itself.

Brahman or Atman does not know anything else than Brahman / Atman says Sri Ramana Maharshi in 40 verses on Reality

17. To those who have not realized the Self, as well as to those who have, the word 'I' refers to the body, but with this difference, that for those who have not realized, the 'I' is confined to the body whereas for those who have realized the Self within the body the 'I' shines as the limitless Self.

18. To those who have not realized (the Self) as well as to those who have the world is real. But to those who have not realized, Truth is adapted to the measure of the world, whereas to those that have, Truth shines as the Formless Perfection, and as the Substratum of the world. This is all the difference between them.

Chapter Two

Unreality of the World

1. Just as the great ocean of milk became still when the Mandara Mountain (with which it was churned by the Devas and the Asuras) became still, even so the illusion of samsara comes to an end when the mind is stilled.

2. Samsara rises when the mind becomes active and ceases when it is still. Still the mind, therefore, by controlling the breath and the latent desires (vasanas).

3. This worthless (lit. burnt out) samsara is born of one's imagination and vanishes in the absence of imagination. It is certain that it is absolutely unsubstantial.

4. The idea of a (live) snake in a picture of a snake ceases to be entertained when the truth is known. Similarly samsara ceases to exist (when the Truth is realized), even if it continues to appear.

7. Dear boy, wonderful indeed is this maya which deludes the entire world. It is on account of it that the Self is not perceived even though it pervades all the limbs of the body.

8. Whatever is seen does not truly exist. It is like the mythical city of Gandharvas (fata morgana) or a mirage.

9. That which is not seen, though within us, is called the eternal and indestructible Self.

10. Just as the trees on the bank of a lake are reflected in the water, so also all these varied objects are reflected in the vast mirror of our consciousness.

11. This creation, which is a mere play of consciousness, rises up, like the delusion of a snake in a rope (when there is ignorance) and comes to an end when there is right knowledge.

12. Even though bondage does not really exist, it becomes strong through desire for worldly enjoyments; when this desire subsides bondage becomes weak.

13. Like waves rising up from the ocean the unstable mind rises out of the vast and stable expanse of the Supreme Self.

14. It is because of that which always, of its own accord, imagines (everything) quickly and freely that this magical show (of the world) is projected in the waking state.

15. This world, though unreal, appears to exist and is the cause of life-long suffering to an ignorant person, just as a (non-existent) ghost (is the cause of fear) to a boy.

16. One who has no idea of gold sees only the bracelet. He does not at all have the idea that it is merely gold.

Sri Ramana Maharshi's 40 verses on Reality

13. The Self, which is Knowledge, is the only Reality. Knowledge of multiplicity is false knowledge. This false knowledge, which is really ignorance, cannot exist apart from the Self, which is Knowledge-Reality. The variety of gold ornaments is unreal, since none of them can exist without the gold of which they are all made.

17. Similarly towns, houses, mountains, serpents, etc. are all in the eyes of the ignorant man, separate objects. From the absolute point of view; this objective (world) is the subject (the Self) itself; it is not separate (from the Self).

18. The world is full of misery to an ignorant man and full of bliss to a wise man. The world is dark to a blind man and bright to one who has eyes.

19. The bliss of a man of discrimination, who has rejected samsara and discarded all mental concepts, constantly increases.

Advaita in 10 (ten) mukhya (major) Upanishads

Advaita sthiti, transient impermanent nature of this world, renunciation of desires, and objects of this world (from mind), Atman and Brahman ar supreme and Atman is Brahman are found in Major Upanishads which teach Advaita Vedanta. 108 Upanishads are listed in Muktika Upanishad (quoted later), out of which Mandukya is considered as alone capable of giving Kaivalya Advaita Jnana. Ten mukhya upanishads or dasopanishads listed are

1. Isa or Isha or IshavAshya (ŚYV) "The Inner Ruler"
2. Kena (SV) "Who moves the world?"
3. Katha (KYV) "Death as Teacher"
4. Prasna, (AV) "The Breath of Life"
5. Mundaka (AV) "Two modes of Knowing"
6. MAndUkya (AV) "Consciousness and its phases"
7. TaittirIya (KYV) "From Food to Joy"
8. Aitareya, (ṚV) "The Microcosm of Man"
9. ChAndogya (SV) "Song and Sacrifice"
10. BrhadAranyaka (ŚYV)

Advaita Vedanta IshAvAsya Upanishad

ॐ पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदं पूर्णात्पुर्णमुदच्यते
पूर्णश्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते ॥
ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

Om Puurnnam-Adah Puurnnam-Idam Puurnnaat-Purnnam-Udacyate
Puurnnashya Puurnnam-Aadaaya Puurnnam-Eva-Avashissyate ||
Om Shaantih Shaantih Shaantih ||

Om.
Completeness is that, completeness is this,
from completeness, completeness comes forth.
Completeness from completeness taken away,
completeness to completeness added,
completeness alone remains.
Om. Peace! Peace! Peace!

OR

Om.
That is the whole, this is the whole;
from the whole, the whole becomes manifest;
taking away the whole from the whole,
the whole remains.

Om. Peace! Peace! Peace!

First sloka (verse) says:

1. All that is in this transient world is covered by the Lord.

Enjoy yourself with an attitude of self-resignation.

Do not desire eagerly the riches of any others.

Brahman is immovable, is substratum of everything. Everything moves within Brahman

4. Unmoving, It is one, faster than the mind. The senses cannot reach It, for It proceeds ahead. Remaining static It overtakes others that run. On account of Its presence, Matarsiva (the wind) conducts the activities of beings.

5. It moves; It moves not. It is far; It is near. It is within all; It is without all.

6. He who perceives all beings in the Self alone, and the Self in all beings, does not entertain any hatred on account of that perception.

7. When a man realises that all beings are but the Self, what delusion is there, what grief, to that perceiver of oneness?

Self is All-pervading

8. That (Self) is all-pervading, radiant, bodiless, soreless, without sinews, pure, untainted by sin, the all-seer, the lord of the mind, transcendent and self-existent. That (Self) did allot in proper order to the eternal Prajapatis known as samvalsara (year) their duties.

9. Those who worship avidya (karma born of ignorance) go to pitch darkness, but to a greater darkness than this go those who are devoted to Vidya (knowledge of the Devatas).

10. Different indeed, they say, is the result (attained) by vidya and different indeed, they say, is the result (attained) by avidya. Thus have we heard from the wise who had explained it to us.

11. He who knows both vidya and avidya together, transcends mortality through avidya and reaches immortality through vidya.

Manifested (SaguNa) and unmanifested (NirguNa) Brahman - fruits of worship of both

12. To pitch darkness they go who worship the Unmanifested (Prakriti). To a greater darkness than this go those who are devoted to the Manifested (Hiranyagarbha).

13. Different indeed, they say, is the result (attained) by the worship of the Manifested and different indeed, they say, is the result (attained) by the worship of the Unmanifested. Thus have we heard from the wise who had explained it to us.

14. He who knows both the Unmanifested and the destructible (Hiranyagarbha) together, transcends death by the (worship of) the destructible and attains immortality by the (worship of) the Unmanifested.

CAUTION: Upanishads are not for the masses. Bhagavad Gita, Guru Gita, Yog VAsistha, Prasna Upanishad, Katha Upanishad and other Advaita Shastras that teach about Brahma-vidya are taught by only one who is established in Brahman and imparted to disciples who is free of worldly desires, pure minded, subtle intellect, has dispassion in society.

Brahma Sutra is only for some elite group of sadhakas who would like to get more clarity after reading all upanishads and are confused about different upanishads saying different things. Brahma Sutra is said to clear this doubts.

Advaita Vedanta in Kena Upanishad - I may not deny Brahman and Brahman do not deny me.

Kena Upanishad starts with a question about Who Am I and says taht May I not deny Brahman and that Brahman do not deny me. It also says that I am a devotee of Atman, indicating that Brahman and Atman are one and the same.

Let my limbs grow strong. Let my speech, vital energy,
eyes, ears, vitality become more powerful. May I not deny
Brahman and may Brahman not deny me. Let there be no
rejection or denial of Brahman by me. May the qualities
proclaimed in the Upanishads be in me as I am a devotee
of the Atman.

Kena Upanishad ends with Chapter 4 saying that

He who has this knowledge is established in It. All that is
infinite, and blissful rests in Brahman, rests in Brahman .

Kena Upanishad also says that Indra and other demi Gods like Agni and Vayu excelled than other Gods as they were very near to knowing Brahman. Indra excelled than other Gods as he was the first to know that 'I am Brahman' (4.2-4.3)

Advaita Vedanta in Katha Upanishad (kathopanishad)

Katha Upanishad is a discourse between Nachiketas and Yamadev, Lord of Death. Yamadev offers Nachiketas to ask 3 boons out of which 2 are for his father and one is Tatva Jnana. Only after examining Nachiketas and repeatedly tempting for another boon which gives worldly pleasures, and rejection by Nachikeyas, Yamadev finally gives instructions on Brahma Jnana. It belongs to Krishna Yajur Veda.

Blind Leading Blind

1.2.5 The deluded staying in illusion thinking themselves to be enlightened go in circles faltering and floundering like sightless-men led by a sightless one.

Brahma Jnana is difficult to grasp and teach

1.2.7 It is not possible for many to hear about it (Brahman) and even having heard many do not understand. The teacher must be a skilful one and the pupil should be sharp in grasp. The knower is a wonderful person instructed by the adept.

Brahman is beyond speech and arguments i.e. mind and intellect

1.2.8 This principle (Brahman) is not understood by pondering in different ways or being taught by one of low ability. There is no other way than being taught by one of unparalleled ability and it transcends all arguments and is subtlest of subtle.

2.9 This knowledge is not attainable by argumentation. It is of easy comprehension only when instructed by another. O! Dearest one! O! Nachiketa! let there be seekers like you! You are truly resolved in your desire.

Meditate to realize Truth and go beyond joy and sorrow (Duality)

1.2.12 The wise man having, by meditating on it , got that which is difficult to realise, effulgent, deep-seated and immanent, dwelling in the cave of the heart transcends both joy and sorrow.

Glory of OM - Meditation on OM gives one all the fruits that is obtained by rituals and one reaches truth which is proclaimed by shastras and the end result of Self Enquiry

1.2.15 That which is proclaimed by all the scriptures, which is said to be the end effect of all rituals and for which enquiry into the ultimate reality is undertaken, I shall tell you about it briefly as "OM".

1.2.16 This syllable (OM) is the highest (Brahman) , this alone is ever-lasting and whoever realises this attains whatever he desires.

1.2.17 This (syllable OM) is the best support, this is the supreme support and upon realising this, one is adored in the world of Brahma (Hiranyagarbha loka)

Consciousness is beyond birth and death

1.2.18 The consciousness (soul) is neither born nor is it subject to death. It has not manifested from anything nor has it given rise to a new entity. This one is unborn, always existing, everlasting, indeterminable in antiquity and is not destroyed when the body (container) is destroyed.

21..19 If the slayer thinks he stays, and slain thinks that he is slain, neither of them knows the truth. This (Knower) neither slays nor is slain.

Note: Similar verse is found in Bhagavad Gita where Bhagavan says that even by killing all you will not kill anything. Rise above deha-bhava or sarira bhava (body consciousness), as all are Atman [citation needed]

About Atman - Upadeshas similar to Bhagavad Gita

1.2.20 Smaller than the smallest, greater than the greatest is the Atman that dwells in the cave of the heart of beings. He who is desireless, realises the glory of Atman through cleansing of mind and senses, and transcends from sorrow.

Similarly we can find many verses which are of advaitic nature, which emphasize on renunciation, transient nature of things, nothing except atman is permanent, limited efforts cannot produce limited results, and Atman is beyond mind and intellect. Atman is beyond duality. By meditating on OM, one can Self Realize. It also says that only a realized teacher can teach to a capable disciple, else it will be like blind leading blind.

1.2.21 While seated, he travels far ; lying down he goes all-over. Who can know other than me that Shining One, who revels and revels.

Note:

Similar verse in Bhagavad Gita says that one who has no eyes but sees, or one who is an eye of an eye, etc is also found. [citation needed]

Similar verse is also found in Ashtavakra Gita - Jnani is the one who does not do any karam even tough he does and vice versa [citation needed]

1.2.22 Having realised the all-pervading Supreme Atman, who is bodiless within the bodies, stable amidst the unstable, the wise one grieves no more.

Atman cannot be realized without the grace of Atman.

1.2.23 By study of the scriptures, lecturing one's own intellectual enquiries or by wide learning or listening, this Atman cannot be realised. Whomsoever, it chooses alone, is attainable that realisation about It, as It reveals Its own nature to him.

Note:

Similar is said in first verse of Avadhut Gita.

1. By the grace of God the Brahmins above all men are inspired with the disposition to non-duality (unity of the Self with God), which relieves them of the great fear.

Sri Ramakrishna says same thing.

In dark place, the one holding lantern can guide others in dark and can see their face, but others cannot see the face of lantern holder. They can only see his face if the lantern holder throws light upon himself.

Impure mind cannot attain Atman

1.2.24 He who is not free from evil conduct, whose senses are not controlled , whose emotions are not harmonised, whose mind is not at peace, cannot attain this Atman by any means of knowledge.

Katha Upanishad contains many verses which concur teachings of Bhagavan in Bhagavad Gita, which is not surprising as Bhagavan has himself said that he is not giving what is new, but that said in Upanishads by Rishis and is imparting Brahma-Vidya

Brahman is beyond attributes

1.3.15 - “That which is soundless, touchless, formless, undecaying, tasteless, internal, smellless, imperishable, immortal, beginningless, endless, (infinite), greater than the greatest, distinct from intelligence, (i.e., distinct from ahamkara) and changelessly constant…..”

Source: Link 1, Link 2

Advaita Vedanta in Prashna Upanishad

Prashna Upanishad is listed fourth in Muktika Upanishad and belongs to Atharveda.

1.1 Sukesa, son of Bharadvaja, Satyakama, son of Sibi, Sauryanin, the grandson of Surya of the Garga clan, Kausalya, son of Asvala, Bhargava of Vidharbha, Kabandhi, the son of Katya, all of them devoted to and rooted in Brahman, with sacrificial fuel in hand, approached Pippalada, hoping that he would tell them about all That.

4.4 The Samana takes with it the two oblations of inhaling and exhaling evenly into the system. The Samana is said to be the priest officiating at the sacrifice i.e. the hota . The mind is indeed the sacrificer and Udana is the desired end of the sacrifice (liberation). It (Udana) causes the sacrificer to attain Brahman every day.

4.7 O ! Pleasant looking one ! just as birds stay put in trees , so it is said that all these stay in the superior self.

4.9 It is indeed the dweller who sees, feels, hears, smells, tastes, thinks, knows; he is the one who acts, the intelligent soul, the Purusa. He is established in the supreme indestructible Atman.

4.10 One of pleasant looks! He who realises that imperishable one into which lapse the mind, the sense organs, the gross elements and the vital airs, becomes all-knowing and enters into everything.

5.2 O ! Satyakama ! Om is really the higher and the lower Brahman. Thus, the one who knows begets one of these two by this method.

Chapter 5 goes on to explain OM, it's 4 states, contemplating on any of the single letter and finally concludes

5.7 Through the first syllable is attained this human world, by the second is obtained the

lunar world and by the third that obtained only by the wise. That which is tranquil, undiminishing, undying and rid of all fear - the greatest is attained by means of this OM.

In Second last verse of chapter 6 Pippalada, the Guru says

6.3 He said to them : 'As far as I know the Supreme are - Brahman - there is nothing greater than this.'

Advaita Vedanta in Mundaka Upanishad

नायमात्मा प्रवचनेन लभ्यो
न मेधया न बहुना श्रुतेन।
यमेवैष वृणुते तेन लभ्य-
स्तस्यैष आत्मा विवृणुते तनूं स्वाम्॥ ३॥

nāyamātmā pravacanena labhyo
na medhayā na bahunā śrutena |
yamevaiṣa vṛṇute tena labhya-
stasyaiṣa ātmā vivṛṇute tanūṁ svām || 3||

You cannot have the knowledge of the Supreme Soul by
means of reasoning, erudition, or studying of the Vedas;
Only through causeless mercy does He reveal His own
person unto him whom He does accept as His own. 3.2.3

OR

This Atman cannot be attained through study of the Vedas,
nor through intelligence, nor through much learning.
He who is chosen by Atman—by him alone is Atman attained.
It is Atman that reveals to the seeker Its true nature. 3.2.3

III.i.7 – " That (i.e., Brahman) is infinite, effulgent, not accessible to thought, formless, subtler than the subtlest; farther than the farthest. It is, at the same time, near at hand in this body. It is available to be recognized in one's very heart, (i.e., as the consciousness behind the ahamkara)".

Advaita Vedanta in Mandukya Upanishad

हरिः ओम् । ओमित्येतदक्षरमिदं सर्वं तस्योपव्याख्यानं भूतं भवद् भविष्यदिति सर्वमोङ्कार एव ।
यच्चान्यत् त्रिकालातीतं तदप्योङ्कार (तदप्य् ओङ्कार) एव ॥ १ ॥

1. Hari OM. OM is everything. One that is past and future that is noting but in reality OM. The one which is above 3 kALa (tenses of time, past, present and future) is in reality OM.

Bhagavan in Gita says that 'I am OM' (BG: 7:8)

6. The Fourth is thought of as that which is not conscious of the internal world, nor conscious of the external world, nor conscious of both the worlds, nor dense with consciousness, nor simple consciousness, nor unconsciousness, which is unseen, actionless, incomprehensible, uninferable, unthinkable, indescribable, whose proof consists in the identity of the Self (in all states), in which all phenomena come to a cessation, and which is unchanging, auspicious, and non-dual. That is the Self; that is to be known.
7. 12. That which is without letters (parts) is the Fourth, beyond apprehension through ordinary means, the cessation of the phenomenal world, the auspicious and the non-dual. Thus Om is certainly the Self. He who knows thus enters the Self by the Self.

All 12 verses of Mandukya Upanishad explain glories and true nature of OM

Advaita Vedanta in Taittiriya Upanishad

Taittiriya Upanishad forms the seventh, eighth and ninth chapters of the Taittiriya Aranyaka of the Krishna Yajur Veda. These chapters are known as Siksha Valli, Ananda Valli and Bhrigu Valli, respectively. Siksha Valli teaches on different types of Meditation. Ananda Valli teaches that Brahman is supreme, Brahman alone can destroy ignorance and one who knows brahman becomes brahman. Brigu Valli is a further discussion where 5 sheaths are discussed and Atman is the innermost core. Also note that second and third valli starts with Shanti Mantra, an approach similar to that Adopted by Shri GaudpadAcharya in Mandukya Karika prakaraNa 4, alAta Santi.

1.8.1 One should contemplate thus : Om is Brahman, and all the universe, perceived or imagined is Om. The entire hierarchy of priests at the sacrifice initiate their respective roles by or responding with reciting 'Om', starting with the Adhvaryu or the supervising priest, the Udgatr who chants the hymns of the Sama Veda, the Hotr priests who recite the Rig Veda, and finally the Brahmana who prays to attain Brahman. Thus by performance in unison alone is Brahman attained.

2.1.1 Om. May Mitra be propitious unto us! May Varuna be propitious unto us! May Aryaman be propitious unto us! May Indra and Brihaspati be propitious unto us! May Vishnu, of wide strides, be propitious unto us! Salutation to Brahman! Salutation to Thee, O Vayu! Thou indeed art the visible Brahman. Thee indeed, O Vayu, I shall proclaim as

the right! Thee indeed, I shall proclaim as the true! May It protect me! May It protect the teacher! May It protect me! May It protect the teacher!

or

May He (Brahman) protect and nourish us. May our joint work and study be vigorous and effective; may we not enter into dispute. Om, May there be peace, peace, peace.

2.1.2 One who realises Brahman attains the Supreme. For it is declared that Brahman is existence, knowledge and Infinite. He who finds Brahman within the secret recesses of his own heart will have no further want as he will have attained everything.

2.1.3 From that very Atman (Brahman) ether came to be; from ether came air, from air came fire, from fire came water, from water came the earth, from the earth came herbs, from herbs came food, and from food came man. This man, his head, his body and every part of him, all come from that ultimate Brahman. All this is further explained here.

2.4.1 He who knows the bliss of Brahman which is beyond the reach of the word and the mind - he does not fear anything.

2.6.4 The one Atman decided to project Himself into the many and thus created the manifold universe of existence, filled it, and yet remained extending everywhere beyond it. Within the infinite, he became the finite, within the undefined, he became the defined, and yet remained the ultimate and the entire Reality.

Advaita Vedanta in Aitareya Upanishad

Part 1, Chapter 1, Section 1

From itself, That one and only Consciousness, the Atman, willed the creation of Cosmos

...

Part Three

Chapter I—Concerning the Self

1 Who is He whom we worship, thinking: "This is the Self"? Which one is the Self? Is it He by whom one sees form, by whom one hears sound and by whom one tastes the sweet and the unsweet?

2 Is it the heart and the mind. It is consciousness, lordship, knowledge, wisdom, retentive power of mind, sense knowledge, steadfastness, though, thoughtfulness, sorrow, memory, concepts, purpose, life, desire, longing: all these are but various names of Consciousness (Prajnanam).

3 He is Brahman, He is Indra, He is Prajapati; He is all these gods; He is the five great elements—earth, air, akasa, water, light; He is all these small creatures and the others which are mixed; He is the origin—those born of an egg, of a womb, of sweat and of a sprout; He is horses, cows, human beings, elephants—whatever breathes here, whether moving on legs or flying in the air or unmoving. **All this is guided by Consciousness, is supported by Consciousness. The basis is Consciousness. Consciousness is Brahman (Prajnanam Brahma).**

4 He, having realised oneness with Pure Consciousness, soared from this world and having obtained all desires in yonder heavenly world, became immortal—yea, became immortal.

Advaita Vedanta Chandogya Upanishad

Chandogya Upanishad begins with the explanation on OM Chapter 1 and beginning verses of chapter 2 talk about OM.

आत्मतः प्राण आत्मत आशा आत्मतः स्मरआत्मत आकाश आत्मतस्तेज आत्मत आपःआत्मत आविर्भावतिरोभावावात्मतोऽन्नम्।।7.26.1.

Atmatah prana atmata asa atmatah smaraAtmata akasa atmatasteja atmata apahAtmata avirbhavatirobhavavatmatonnam.

"From the Self is life; from the Self is desire; from the Self is love; from the Self is ether; from the Self is light; from the Self are the waters; from the Self is appearance and disappearance; from the Self is food." 7.26.1.

Connection with BG 13:31 by Shri Adi Shankaracharya

V-xxiv-4: Therefore, even if one, who knows thus, offers the remnant of his food to a Chandala, then also that food becomes his offering to the Vaisvanara Atman only. There is this verse about it.

VI-ix-1-2: ‘As, dear boy, the bees make honey by collecting juices from different trees and reduce them into one essence, and there, as these juices have no such discrimination as “I am the juice of this tree, I am the juice of that tree”; even so, dear boy, all these creatures having merged into Being, do not know, “We have merged into Being.”

VI-ix-4: 'That Being which is this subtle essence (cause), even That all this world has for its self. That is the true. That is the Atman. That thou art, O Svetaketu.' 'Revered sir, please explain it further to me'. 'So be it, dear boy', said (the father).

verses from 6.9.4 to 6.15.3 teach advaita

Narada approaches Sanata Kumara for Atma Jnana.

VII-i-1: Om. 'Revered sir, teach me,' thus saying Narada approached Sanatkumara. Sanatkumara said to him, 'What you already know, declaring that to me, be my disciple. What is beyond that I shall tell you.' Narada said:

VII-i-2: 'Revered sir, I know the Rig-Veda, the Yajur-Veda, the Sama-Veda and the Atharvanas the fourth, the Itihasa-Purana as the fifth, grammar, the rules for the worship of the ancestors, mathematics, the science of portents, the science of treasures, logic, the science of ethics, etymology, the ancillary knowledge of the Vedas, the physical sciences, the science of war, the science of the stars, the science related to serpents, and the fine arts – all this I know, revered sir.'

VII-i-3: 'Revered sir, however, I am only a knower of verbal texts, not a knower of Atman. Indeed I have heard from persons like your revered self that a knower of Atman goes beyond grief. I am in such a state of grief. May your revered self take me across it.' Sanatkumara replied to him,' Whatsoever you have studied here, really it is only a name.'

Here one goes from gross to subtle to treat each and everything as Brahman like water, fire, air, akash, will, understanding, mind, etc is considered as Brahman. But still Narada is not satisfied with this and asks that there must be something greater than the one explained.

VII-xvi-1: 'But he really speaks surpassingly who speaks surpassingly with truth'. 'Revered sir, being such, I would speak surpassingly with truth'. 'But one must desire to understand the truth'. 'Revered sir, I desire to understand the truth'.

VII-xvii-1: 'When one understands, then alone does one declare the truth. Without understanding, one does not declare the truth. Only he who understands declares the truth. But one must desire to understand understanding.' 'Revered sir, I desire to understand understanding'.

Real Happiness (Ananda) is infinite

VII-xxii-1: 'When one obtains happiness', then alone does one act. Without obtaining happiness one does not act. Only on obtaining happiness does one act.

But one must desire to understand happiness'. 'Revered sir, I desire to understand happiness'.

VII-xxiii-1: That which is infinite, is alone happiness. There is no happiness in anything finite. The infinite alone is happiness. But one must desire to understand the infinite'. 'Revered sir, I desire to understand the infinite'.

Brahman is beyond understanding and senses

VII-xxiv-1: 'In which one sees nothing else, hears nothing else, understands nothing else, that is infinite. But that in which one sees something else, hears something else, understands something else, is the finite. That which is infinite, is alone immortal, and that which is finite, is mortal'. 'Revered sir, in what is that infinite established ?' 'On its own greatness or not even on its own greatness'.

VII-xxiv-2: 'Here in this world people call cows and horses, elephants and gold, servants and wives, fields and houses, "greatness". I do not speak thus (of greatness), for in that case one thing would be established in another. What I do say is thus:

Brahman is Infinite

VII-xxv-1: 'That infinite alone is below. That is above. That is behind. That is in front. That is to the south. That is to the north. That alone is all this. So next is the teaching in regard to the self-sense. I alone am below. I am above. I am behind. I am in front. I am to the south. I am to the north. I alone am all this.

VII-xxv-2: 'So now is the teaching through Atman. Atman alone is below. Atman is above. Atman is behind. Atman is in front. Atman is to the south. Atman is to the north. Atman alone is all this. Verily, he it is who sees thus, and understands thus, has pleasure in Atman, delight in Atman, union in Atman, joy in Atman. He becomes Self-sovereign; he becomes free to act as he wishes in all the worlds. But those who know otherwise than this are ruled by others and live in perishable worlds; they are not free to act as they wish in all the worlds.

VII-xxvi-1: Verily, for him alone, who sees thus, reflects thus and understands thus, Prana springs from Atman, aspiration from Atman, memory from Atman, Akasa from Atman, fire from Atman, water from Atman, appearance and disappearances from Atman, food from Atman, strength from Atman, understanding from Atman, contemplation from Atman, intelligence from Atman, will from Atman, mind from Atman, speech from Atman, name from Atman, hymns from Atman, rites from Atman, all this (springs) from Atman alone.

VII-xxvi-2: 'There is this verse about it: "He who sees this does not see death nor illness nor any sorrow. He who sees this sees all things and obtains all things in all ways." 'He is one, becomes threefold, fivefold, sevenfold and also ninefold. Then again he is called the elevenfold, also a hundred-and-ten-fold and also a thousand-and twenty-fold. ''When nourishment is pure, reflection and higher understanding become pure. When reflection and higher understanding are pure, memory becomes strong. When memory becomes strong, there is release from all the knots of the heart. The revered Sanatkumara showed to Narada, after his impurities had been washed off, the further shore of darkness. People call Sanatkumara as Skanda – yea, they call him Skanda.

Everything is inside Brahman

VIII-i-1: Om. Now, in this city of Brahman, there is a mansion in the shape of a small lotus; in it is a small inner Akasa. What is within that, that should be sought; that indeed, one should desire to understand.

VIII-i-2-3: If the disciples should say to him, 'In this city of Brahman in which is a small mansion in the shape of a lotus and in the small inner Akasa within – what is it that lies there which should be sought, which one should desire to understand ?' – he should say in reply, 'As large indeed as is this Akasa, so large is that Akasa in the heart. Within it, indeed, are contained both heaven and earth, both fire and air, both the sun and the moon, lightning and the stars. Whatever there is of him in this world and whatever is not, all that is contained within it.'

Heart is Atman, Atman is Brahman

VIII-iii-3: **This Atman verily is in the heart.** Its etymological explanation is this. This (Atman) is in the heart, hence it is the heart. He who knows thus indeed goes daily into the heavenly world.

VIII-iii-4: Now that serene and happy being, rising out of this body and reaching the highest light, appears in his own true form. **This is the Atman, said the teacher. This is the immortal, the fearless. This is Brahman. Verily, the name of this Brahman is the True.**

VIII-iii-5: These are indeed the three syllables, 'sa', 'ti', 'yam'. What is 'sa', that is the immortal, and what is 'ti', that is the mortal, and what is 'yam', with it one holds the two together. Because with it one holds the two together, therefore it is 'yam'. Verily, he who knows thus goes to the heavenly world.'

Atman is beyond everything

VIII-iv-1: Now, this Atman is the dyke, the embankment for the safety of these worlds. This dyke, **neither the day nor the night crosses, nor old age nor death nor sorrow, nor merit nor demerit. All evils turn back from it,** for this Brahman-world is free from

evil.

VIII-iv-2: **Therefore, verily, on reaching this dyke, if one was blind he ceases to be blind; if wounded, he ceases to be wounded, if afflicted- he ceases to be afflicted. Therefore, verily, on reaching this dyke, even night becomes day,** for this Brahman-world is ever illumined.

He who attains Atman attains everything

VIII-vii-1: The Atman which is free from evil, free from old age, free from death, free from sorrow, free from hunger and thirst, whose desire is of the truth, whose resolve is of the truth, he should be sought, him one should desire to understand. **He who has found out and who understands that Atman attains all the worlds and all the desires.** Thus spoke Prajapati.

Advaita Vedanta BrihadAraNya Upanishad

BrihadaraNya Upanishad begins with Shanti Mantra (Peace Chant) which is of Advaita Nature

ॐ असतो मा सद्गमय ।
तमसो मा ज्योतिर्गमय ।
मृत्योर्मा अमृतं गमय ।
ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

Om Asato Maa Sad-Gamaya |
Tamaso Maa Jyotir-Gamaya |
Mrtyor-Maa Amrtam Gamaya |
Om Shaantih Shaantih Shaantih ||

Meaning:
Om, Lead us from Unreality (of Transitory Existence) to the Reality (of Self), Lead us from the Darkness (of Ignorance) to the Light (of Spiritual Knowledge), Lead us from the Fear of Death to the Knowledge of Immortality. Om Peace, Peace, Peace.

Another Shanti Mantra

Om ! That (Brahman) is infinite, and this (universe) is infinite.
The infinite proceeds from the infinite.
(Then) taking the infinitude of the infinite (universe),
It remains as the infinite (Brahman) alone.
Om ! Peace ! Peace ! Peace !

Brahman can only be described by negation

II-iii-6: The form of that 'being' is as follows: like a cloth dyed with turmeric, or like grey sheep's wool, or like the (scarlet) insect called Indragopa, or like a tongue of fire, or like a white lotus, or like a flash of lightning. He who knows it as such attains splendour like a flash of lightning. **Now therefore the description (of Brahman): 'Neti-Neti' or 'Not this, not this'. Because there is no other and more appropriate description than this 'Neti' 'Not this'.** Now Its name: 'The Truth of truth'. The vital force is truth, and It is the Truth of that.

Definition of Brahman

III-viii-8: He said: O Gargi, the knowers of Brahman say, this Immutable (Brahman) is that. It is neither gross nor minute, neither short nor long, neither red colour nor oiliness, neither shadow nor darkness, neither air nor ether, unattached, neither savour nor odour, without eyes or ears, without the vocal organ or mind, non-luminous, without the vital force or mouth, not a measure, and without interior or exterior. It does not eat anything, nor is It eaten by anybody.

III-viii-10: He, O Gargi, who in this world, without knowing this Immutable, offers oblations in the fire, performs sacrifices and undergoes austerities even for many thousand years, finds all such acts but perishable; he, O Gargi, who departs from this world without knowing this Immutable, is miserable. But he, O Gargi, who departs from this world after knowing this Immutable, is a knower of Brahman.

Brahman is Witness

III-viii-11: This Immutable, O Gargi, is never seen but is the Witness; It is never heard, but is the Hearer; It is never thought, but is the Thinker; It is never known, but is the Knower. There is no other witness but This, no other hearer but This, no other thinker but This, no other knower but This. By this Immutable, O Gargi, is the (Unmanifested) ether pervaded.

Atman is Brahman

II-v-15: This Self, already mentioned, is the ruler of all beings, and the king of all beings. Just as all the spokes are fixed in the nave and the felloe of a chariot-wheel, so are all beings, all gods, all worlds, all organs and all these (individual) selves fixed in this Self.

II-v-19: This is that meditation on things mutually helpful which Dadhyac, versed in the Atharva-Veda, taught the Asvins. Perceiving this the Rishi said, '(He) transformed Himself in accordance with each form; that form of His was for the sake of making Him known.

The Lord on account of Maya (notions superimposed by ignorance) is perceived as manifold, for to Him are yoked ten organs, nay, hundreds of them. He is the organs; He is ten and thousands – many and infinite. That Brahman is without prior or posterior, without interior or exterior. This self, the perceiver of everything, is Brahman. This is the teaching.

Advaita in other Upanishads

Svetashvatara Upanishad on Brahman as Ishwara

(cited by Adi Sankara and vaiSNava AcArya-s)

Svetashvatara or Shvetashvatara Upanishad is considered an an important and often clubbed with other 10 major Upanishads, some saying that there are 11 major upanishads. It belongs to Krishna Yajur Veda.

I-15-16: As oil in sesame seeds, as butter in curds, as water in underground springs, as fire in wood, even so this Self is perceived in the self. He who, by means of truthfulness, self-control and concentration, looks again and again for this Self, which is all-pervading like butter contained in milk, and which is rooted in self-knowledge and meditation – he becomes that Supreme Brahman, the destroyer of ignorance.

II-14: Just as the same metal disc, which was stained by dust before, shines brilliantly when cleaned, so the embodied being, seeing the truth of Atman, realizes oneness, attains the goal and becomes sorrowless.

II-15: When the Yogin realizes the truth of Brahman, through the perception of the truth of Atman in this body as a self-luminous entity, then, knowing the Divinity as unborn, eternal and free from all the modifications of Prakriti, he is freed from all sins.

III-1: It is the self-same One who exists alone at the time of creation and dissolution of the universe, that assumes manifold powers and appears as the Divine Lord by virtue of His inscrutable power of Maya. He it is that protects all the worlds and controls all the various forces working therein. Those who realize this Being becomes immortal.

NirguNa Brahman

III-7: **Higher than this Personal Brahman is the infinite Supreme Brahman,** who is concealed in all beings according to their bodies, and who, though remaining single, envelops the whole universe. **Knowing him to be the Lord, one becomes immortal.**

III-9: There is naught higher than or different from Him; naught greater or more minute than Him. Rooted in His own glory He stands like a tree, one without a second and immovable. By that Being the whole universe is filled.

III-10: That Being is far beyond this world, is formless and free from misery. They who know this become immortal. But all others have indeed to suffer misery alone.

III-12: This Self is indeed the mighty Lord. He is the imperishable (internal) light that controls everything. He guides the intellect of all beings so as to enable them to gain that extremely pure state (of Mukti).

III-15: That which is, that which was, and that which is yet to be – all this is nothing but this Infinite Being. Though He grows beyond His own nature into the form of the objective universe, He still remains the lord of immortality.

III-17: They realize Him as shining by the functions of all the senses yet without the senses as the lord of all, the ruler of all, the refuge of all and the friend of all.

III-19: Without hands and feet He goes fast and grasps; without eyes He sees; without ears He hears. He knows whatever is to be known, yet there is none who knows Him. They say He is the foremost, the great Infinite Being.

III-20: Subtler than even the subtlest and greater than the greatest, the Atman is concealed in the heart of the creature. By the grace of the Creator, one becomes free from sorrows and desires, and then realizes Him as the great Lord.

III-21: I know this undecaying primeval Immanent Self of all, who is omnipresent because of His all-pervasiveness, and whom the expounders of Brahman declare to be eternally free from birth.

IV-1: May that Divine Being, who, though Himself colourless, gives rise to various colours in different ways with the help of His own power, for His own inscrutable purpose, and who dissolves the whole world in Himself in the end – may He endow us with good thoughts !

IV-17: This Divinity, who created the universe and who pervades everything, always dwells in the hearts of creatures, being finitized by emotions, intellect, will and imagination. Those who realize this become immortal.

Advaita in Muktika Upanishad (Muktikopanishad)

(cited by vidyAraNya svAmI)

Muktika Upanishad is a discource between Bhagavan Rama and Rama Bhakta Hanuman ji, which occurs when Rama was about to leave this world and return to Vaikuntha.

I-i-18-23. Rama: Liberation is of four kinds: Salokya etc. But the only real type is Kaivalya. Anybody even though leading a wicked life, attains Salokya, not other worlds, by worshipping my name. Dying in the sacred Brahmanala in Kashi, he will get the Taraka-mantra and also liberation, without rebirth. On dying anywhere (else) in Kashi, Maheshvara will utter the Taraka-mantra in his right ear. He gets Sarupya with me as his sins are washed away.

The same is called Salokya and Sarupya. Persevering in good conduct, with mind fixed upon me, loving me as the Self of all, the twice-born gets nearer to me – This is called the three forms of liberation. Salokya, Sarupya and Samipya.

I-i-24-25. Meditating on my eternal form as prescribed by the Teacher, one will surely achieve identity with me like the insects changing into the bee. This alone is the liberation of identity (Sayujya) yielding the bliss of Brahman.

All these four kinds of Mukti will be got by worshipping Me.

I-i-26-29. But by what means is the Kaivalya kind of Moksha got ? The Mandukya is enough; if knowledge is not got from it, then study the Ten Upanishads. Getting knowledge very soon, you will reach my abode. If certainty is not got even then, study the 32 Upanishads and stop. If desiring Moksha without the body, read the 108 Upanishads.

Source

Advaita Vedanta in subAla Upanishad

(cited by rAmAnuja)

1.4. At the end, becoming Vaisvanara (fire), he burned (destroyed) all creatures – earth was absorbed in water, water in fire, fire in air, air in ether, ether in sense organs, they in subtle elements, they in Prakriti, Prakriti in Mahat, Mahat in Avyakta, Avyakta in Akshara, Akshara in Tamas, it in God. Then there is neither existent nor non-existent. This is the doctrine of dissolution (as given in) Vedas.

3.1. In the beginning, this was non-existent. The man of wisdom does grow, meditating

upon the Atman which has no birth, no rising, nor setting, unestablished, having no sound, touch, form, taste, smell, decay nor any thing bigger.

3.2. Without vital breath, face, ears, speech, mind, radiance, eyes, name, lineage, head, hands or feet, smoothness, blood, measurability, neither long, short nor gross, nor atomic, shoreless, beyond description, not open, nor illuminable, nor closed, without inside or outside; it neither eats nor is eaten

5.15. There is oneness – how can there be duality – No mortality – how immortality ? Not cognisant inwardly or outwardly, or both ways – not a mass of knowledge, neither knowing nor not knowing..

Advaita in nirAlambopaniShad

(translated by lahiri mahASaya of kriyA yOga)

ब्रह्म सत्यं जगन्मिथ्या जीवो ब्रहैव नापर (निरालम्बोपनिषद - २८)

"Brahma Satyam Jagan Mithya Jivo Brahmaiva Na Aparah" - nirAlambopaniShada - 28 (Niraalamba Upanishad - 28)

tejobindu

Advaita and Ajaata vAda in tejobindu Upanishad

(dipikA by nArAyaNa, translated by lahiri mahASaya of kriyA yOga)

इदं प्रपच्चं नास्त्येव नोत्पन्नं नोत्थितं जगत् - ५/३१

ida.m prapachcha.m naastyeva notpanna.m notthita.m jagata - 5/31

This jagat-rupi (like) prapancha is not there, did not get created and was never there - 5/31

मायाकार्यादिकं नास्ति माया नास्ति भयं नहि - ५/३३

mAyAkAryAdika.m naasti mAyA nAsti bhaya.m naasti

maya's karya (work -result), jagata etc is not there (non-existent), maya is not there (present) and so there is no fear - 5/33

Advaita in Amrit Bindu Upanishad

(cited by vidyAraNya svAmI)

7. One should duly practise concentration on Om (first) through the means of its letters, then meditate on Om without regard to its letters. Finally on the realisation with this latter form of meditation on Om, the idea of the non-entity is attained as entity.

8. That alone is Brahman, without component parts, without doubt and without taint. Realising "I am that Brahman" one becomes the immutable Brahman.

9. (Brahman is) without doubt, endless, beyond reason and analogy, beyond all proofs and causeless knowing which the wise one becomes free.

10. The highest Truth is that (pure consciousness) which realises, "There is neither control of the mind, nor its coming into play", "Neither am I bound, nor am I a worshipper, neither am I a seeker after liberation, nor one-who has attained liberation".

19. Of cows which are of diverse colours the milk is of the same colour. (the intelligent one) regards Jnana as the milk, and the many-branched Vedas as the cows.

20. Like the butter hidden in milk, the Pure Consciousness resides in every being. That ought to be constantly churned out by the churning rod of the mind.

21. Taking hold of the rope of knowledge, one should bring out, like fire, the Supreme Brahman. I am that Brahman indivisible, immutable, and calm, thus it is thought of.

22. In Whom reside all beings, and Who resides in all beings by virtue of His being the giver of grace to all – I am that Soul of the Universe, the Supreme Being, I am that Soul of the Universe, the Supreme Being.

source

Advaita Vedanta in Kaushitaki Brahmana Upanishad

(cited by Adi Sankara, vidyAraNya svAmI)

I-6. Self as Truth; it is the Self of all and is Brahman. He should say, 'The Real'.

'What is that, viz., the Real ?' What is other than the gods (sense-organs) and the vital breaths, that is the sat (what is) As for the gods and the vital breaths, they are the tvam (the you). This is expressed by the word satyam. It is as extensive as all this. You are this world-all. Thus then he speaks to him. This very thing has been expressed by a Rig verse:

Having Yajus as her belly, having the Saman as his head

Having the Rik as his form imperishable.

Is Brahman – thus is he to be known.

The great seen consists on the Vedas.

III-7. For verily without intelligence speech would not make any name whatsoever known.

'My mind was elsewhere' one says, 'I did not cognise that name'.

For verily without intelligence breath would not make any odour whatsoever known.

'My mind was elsewhere' one says, 'I did not cognise that odour'.

For verily without intelligence the eye would not make any form whatsoever known.

'My mind was elsewhere' one says, 'I did not cognise that form'.

For verily without intelligence the ear would not make any sound whatsoever known.

'My mind was elsewhere' one says, 'I did not cognise the sound'.

For verily without intelligence the tongue would not make any taste of food whatsoever known. 'My mind was elsewhere' one says, 'I did not cognise that taste of food'.

For verily without intelligence the two hands would not make any action whatsoever known. 'My mind was elsewhere' one says, 'I did not cognise that action'.

For verily without intelligence the body would not make known any pleasure or pain whatsoever. 'My mind was elsewhere' one says, 'I did not cognise that pleasure and pain'.

For verily without intelligence the generative organ would not make known any bliss, delight and procreation whatsoever. 'My mind was elsewhere' one says, 'I did not cognise that bliss, delight and procreation'.

For verily without intelligence the two feet would not make known any going whatsoever. 'My mind was elsewhere' one says, 'I did not cognise that going'.

For verily without intelligence no thought whatever would be effected, nothing cognisable would be cognized.

III-8. One has to win the pure knowledge of the unity of Brahman and Atman.

Speech is not what one should seek to know; one should know the speaker.

Smell is not what one should seek to know; one should know the smeller.

Form is not what one should seek to know; one should know the seer.

Sound is not what one should seek to know; one should know the hearer.

Taste of food is not what one should seek to know; one should know the knower of the taste of food.

Deed is not what one should seek to know; one should know the doer.

Pleasure and pain are not what one should seek to know; one should know the discerner of pleasure and pain.

Bliss, delight and procreation are not what one should seek to know; one should know the discerner of bliss, delight and procreation.

Going is not what one should seek to know; one should know the goer.

Mind is not what one should seek to know; one should know the thinker.

These ten essential elements, verily, are with reference to intelligence. These ten intelligential elements are with reference to existence. Verily if there were no elements of existence, there would be no elements of intelligence. Verily if there were no elements of intelligence, there would be no elements of existence. Truly from either alone, no form whatever would be possible.

And this (the Self of intelligence) is not diverse. But as of a chariot, the felly is fixed on the spokes and the spokes are fixed on the hub, even so these elements of existence are fixed on the elements of intelligence; the elements of intelligence are fixed on the vital breath.

This vital breath, truly, is the Self of intelligence: (it is) bliss, ageless, immortal. He does not become greater with good action nor indeed lesser with bad action. This one truly indeed causes him whom he wishes to lead up from this world to perform good action. This one also indeed causes him whom he wishes to lead downwards to perform bad action. He is the protector of the world; he is the sovereign of the world; he is the Lord of all. 'He is myself' – this one should know. 'He is my Self' – This one should know.

Note: Kaushitaki Upanishad is referred by Shri Chandrashekhar Saraswati, Shankaracharya of Kanchi Kamkoti Peetha, in the book 'The Vedas'

(The reference of Brahma-Upanishad is given in Chandogya Upanishad (3.11.3), dipikA by nArAyaNa tIrtha)

1. Om ! Shaunaka, householder of fame, once asked Bhagavan Pippalada of Angira's family: In this body, the divine city of Brahman, installed, how do they create ? Whose glory does this constitute ? Who is he who became all this glory ?

2. Unto him (Shaunaka) he (Pippalada) imparted the supreme Wisdom of Brahman: That is Prana, the Atman. He constitutes the glory of the Atman, the life of the Devas. He represents both the life and the death of the Devas. That Brahman who shines within the divine Brahmapura (or body) as the faultless One, devoid of manifested effects, self-effulgent, all-pervading, He (it is who) controls (the Jiva), like a spider controlling the king of bees. Just as spiders by means of one thread project and withdraw the web, so also the Prana, (who) retires drawing back his creation. Prana belongs to the Nadis or subtle nerve-chords as their Devata or indwelling deity. One in dreamless sleep goes through that state to one's own Abode, like a falcon and the sky – just as a falcon goes (to its nest) borne on the sky. He states: — Just as this Devadatta (in dreamless sleep) runs not away even when struck with a stick, even so he does not also attach himself to good or evil consequences of the life's ordained activities; just as a child enjoys itself (spontaneously) without motive or desiring fruit, even so this Devadatta (the subject of dreamless sleep) enjoys happiness in that state. He knows being the Light Supreme. Desiring Light he enjoys the Light. So also he returns by the same way to the dream-state, like a leech: just as a leech carries itself on to the other points in front – (first) fixing upon the next point. And that state which he does not give up for a next one is called the waking state. (He carries all these states within himself) just as a (Vedic) deity bears the eight sacrificial cups simultaneously. **It is from Him that the source of the Vedas and the Devas hang like breasts. In this waking state particularly good and evil obtain for the shining being (i.e. man's Self) as ordained. This being or Self is fully self-extended (into world-forms), he is the indwelling controller of things and beings, he is the Bird, the Crab, the Lotus, he is the Purusha, the Prana, the destroyer, the cause and the effect, the Brahman and the Atman, he is the Devata making everything known. Whoever knows all this attains to the transcendent Brahman, the underlying support, the subjective principle.**

3. Now this Purusha has four seats, the navel, the heart, the throat, and the head. In these shines forth the Brahman with four aspects: the state of wakefulness, of dream, of dreamless sleep, and the fourth or transcendental state. **In the wakeful state, He is Brahma; in the dreaming state, He is Vishnu; in dreamless sleep He is Rudra; and the fourth state is the Supreme Indestructible One; and He again is the Sun, the Vishnu, the Ishwara, He is the Purusha, He the Prana, He the Jive or the animate being, He the Fire, The Ishwara, and the Resplendent; (yea) that Brahman which is transcendent shines within all these ! In Itself, It is devoid of mind, of ears, of hands and feet, of light. There neither are the worlds existing nor non-existing, neither are the Vedas or the Devas or the sacrifices existing nor non-existing, neither is the mother or father or daughter-in-law existing nor non-existing, neither is Chandala's son or Pulkasa's son existing nor non-existing, neither is the mendicant existing nor non-existing, so neither all the creatures or the**

ascetics; and thus only the One Highest Brahman shines there. Within the recess of the heart is that Akasa of consciousness – that with many openings, the aim of knowledge, within the space of the heart – in which all this (universe outside) evolves and moves about, in which all this is warped and woofed (as it were). (Who knows this), knows fully all creation. There the Devas, the Rishis, the Pitris have no control, for being fully awakened, one becomes the knower of all truth.

4. In the heart the Devas live, in the heart the Pranas are installed, in the heart exist the supreme Prana and Light as also the immanent Cause with threefold constituents and the Mahat principle.

5. It exists within this heart, that is, in the consciousness. "Put on the sacrificial thread which is supremely sacred, which became manifest of yore with Prajapati (the first created Being) Himself, which embodies longevity, eminence and purity, and may it be strength and puissance to you !"

6. The enlightened one should discard the external thread putting it off with the sacred tuft of hair on the head; the Supreme Brahman as the all-pervading one is the thread, and he should put this on.

7. The Sutra (or thread) is so called because of its having pierced through and started (the process of becoming). This Sutra verily constitutes the Supreme State. By whom this Sutra is known, he is the Vipra (sage), he has reached beyond the Vedas.

8. By It all this (universe) is transfixed, as a collection of gems is stringed together on a thread. The Yogi who is the knower of all Yogas and the seer of truth should put on this thread.

9. Established in the state of highest Yoga, the wise one should put off the external thread. One who is really self-conscious must put on the thread constituted by awareness of Brahman.

10. On account of wearing this Sutra or thread, they can neither become contaminated nor unclean, those (namely) who have this thread existing within them – those, with this sacrificial thread of knowledge.

11. They, among men, (really) know the Sutra, they (really) wear the sacrificial thread (on themselves), who are devoted to Jnana (the highest knowledge), who have this Jnana for their sacred hair-tuft, this Jnana for their sacred thread.

12. For them Jnana is the greatest purifier – Jnana, that is the best as such. Those who have this Jnana for their tufted hair are as non-different from it as is fire from its flame. This wise one is (really) said to be a Shikhi (or wearer of the tufted hair), while others are mere growers of hair (on the head).

13. But those belonging to the three castes (Brahmanas, Kshatriyas and Vaisyas) who have the right of performing Vedic works have to put on this (i.e. the common) sacred thread, as surely this thread is ordained to be part of such works.

14. One who has the Jnana for his tufted hair, and the same for his sacred thread, has everything about him characterised by Brahmanahood – so know the knowers of the Vedas !

15. This sacred thread (of Yajna, i.e. of the all-pervading Reality) is, again, the purification (itself) and that which is the end-all (of Vedic works); and the wearer of this thread is the wise one – is Yajna himself as well as the knower of Yajna.

16. The One Lord (self-effulgent) in all beings remaining hidden, all-pervading and the Self of all beings, controlling and watching over all works (good or bad), living in all creatures and the Witness (i.e. neither the doer of any acts nor the enjoyer), the Supreme Intelligence, the One without a second, having no attributes.

17. The one Intelligent (active) Being among the many inactive, He who makes the many from what is one – the wise men who find out this Self, theirs is the eternal peace, not of others.

18. Having made oneself the Arani, and the Pranava the upper Arani and rubbing them together through the practice of meditation, see the Lord in His hidden reality.

19. As in the oil in the sesamum seed, the butter in the curd, water in the flowing waves, and fire in the Shami wood, so is the Atman in one's self to be discovered by one who searches for It through truth and austere practice.

20. As the spider weaves out the web and again withdraws it, so the Jiva comes out to and goes back again to the wakeful and dreaming states respectively.

21. The heart (i.e. the inner chamber of heart) resembles the calyx of a lotus, full of cavities and also with its face turned downwards. Know that to be the great habitat of the whole universe.

22. Know the wakeful state to have for its centre the eyes; the dreaming state should be assigned to the throat; the state of dreamless sleep is in the heart; and the transcendental state is in the crown of the head.

23. From the fact of an individual holding his self by means of Prajna or spiritual understanding in the Supreme Self, we have what is called Sandhya and Dhyana, as also the worshipping associated with Sandhya.

24. The Sandhya by meditation is devoid of any offering of liquids and so also of any exertion of body and speech; it is the unifying principle for all creatures, and this is really the Sandhya for Ekadandis.

26. From which without reaching It, the speech falls back with the mind, that is the transcendental Bliss of this embodied being, knowing which the wise one is released (from all bondage).

26. (And this Bliss is verily) the Self which pervades the whole universe, as the butter diffused within the milk.

This is the Brahmopanishad, or the supreme wisdom of Brahman, in the form of a unity of the Atman of all, founded on the spiritual discipline (Tapas) which is (nothing but) the Vidya or science of the Atman.

Advaita Vedanta in Maha Upanishad

(cited by rAmAnuja)

V-44-49. The visible cosmos of un-moving and moving things melts away like dream in a (dreamless) sleep. **The wise people have attributed, for empirical purposes, names for the supreme Being, such as, Rita Atma, Para Brahma, Truth etc. Just as armlets etc., are only words and meanings, not different from gold, so also is the magical illusion of the cosmos extended by the supreme being.**

The perceived being inside the visible world is called bondage, in the absence (dissolution) of the visible, he is realized. What is called the visible is the projection like, 'The universe is you, and I'. The illusion of the world is spread only by the mind – as long as it happens, this is no liberation.

Advaita Vedanta in MahAnArAyaNa Upanishad

Referred By Shri Adi Shankaracharya in his Brahmasutra Bhasya

I-2: That in which all this universe exists together and into which it dissolves. That in which all the gods remain enjoying their respective powers – That certainly is whatever that has been in the past and whatever indeed is to come in the future. This cause of the universe, Prajapati, is supported by His own imperishable nature described as absolute ether.

I-3: He by whom the space between heaven and earth as well as the heaven and the earth are enveloped. He by whom the sun burns with heat and gives light, and He whom the sages bind in the ether of their hearts (with the string of meditation), in whom – The Imperishable One – all creatures abide.

I-4-5: From whom the creatrix of the world, Prakriti, was born, who created in the world creatures out of elements such as water, who entered beings consisting of herbs, quadrupeds and men as the inner controller, who is greater than the greatest, who is one without a second, who is imperishable, who is of unlimited forms, who is the universe, who is ancient, who remains beyond darkness or Prakriti and who is higher than the highest – nothing else exists other than, or subtler than, Him.

I-6: Sages declare: That alone is right and That alone is true: That alone is the venerable Brahman contemplated by the wise. Acts of worship and social utility also are that Reality. That alone being the navel of the universe, sustains manifoldly the universe which arose in the past and which springs to existence at present.

I-7: That alone is Fire: That is Air; That is Sun; That verily is Moon; That alone is shining Stars and Ambrosia. That is Food; That is Water and He is the Lord of creatures.

I-8-9: All nimesas, kalas, muhurtas, kasthas, days, half-months, months, and seasons, were born from the self-luminous Person. The year also was born from Him. He milked water and also these two, the firmament and the heaven.

I-10: No person ever grasped by his understanding the upward limit of this Paramatman, nor His limit across, nor His middle portion. His name is 'great glory' for no one limits His nature by definition.

I-11: His form is not to be beheld; none whosoever beholds Him with the eye. Those who meditate on Him with their minds undistracted and fixed in the heart know Him; they become immortal.

Advaita Vedanta in JabAla Upanishad

Referred By Shri Adi Shankaracharya in his Brahmasutra Bhasya

I-1. Brihaspati (the preceptor of the gods) asked (the sage) Yajnavalkya: (Which is) the Kurukshetra, (the famous holy place that destroys sins and protects the good, (the place) where the gods perform sacrifices and which is the abode of Brahman in all beings ? (Yajnavalkya replied): Avimukta is the Kurukshetra, (the place) where the gods perform sacrifices to deities and which is the abode of Brahman in all beings (i.e. the middle of the eye-brows). Hence wherever one goes one shall think thus: This is the Kurukshetra, the place where the gods perform sacrifices to the deities and which is the abode of Brahman in all beings. This is the spot where, when the vital airs depart from the living person, Rudra imparts the mantra (Taraka Brahman) to him by which, becoming immortal, he attains liberation (final beatitude). Hence one shall resort to the Avimukta; shall not desert the Avimukta. (Brihaspati approved of the statement saying): 'So it is, Yajnavalkya', verily it is so, O, revered one ! 'It is so Yajnavalkya'.

II-1. Thereafter the sage Atri (son of the creator Brahma) asked of Yajnavalkya: 'How am I to realize the Self which is infinite and unmanifest ?' (To this) Yajnavalkya replied: That Avimukta (Lord Siva as the redeemer) is to be worshipped; the Self which is infinite and unmanifest, is established in (i.e., is non-different from) the Avimukta (in Ishvara, possessed of attributes)'.

I-2. 'Which is that (place) where Avimukta is established ?' 'He is established in between varana and nasi'. 'What is (meant by) varana and what (by) nasi ?' 'The varana is so called

as it wards off all the faults committed by the (ten) organs (of perception and action). The nasi is so named as it destroys all sins committed by the (ten) organs. (The place between the varana and the nasi is the meeting place of the upper part of the nose and the centre of the eye brows). 'Which is the seat of that (Avimukta) ?' 'That, which is the (well known) juncture of the eye brows and the nose, is the juncture of heaven (in the form of the crown of the head) and this world (in the form at the end of the chin). The knowers of the Veda worship indeed this juncture (Samadhi) as Sandhya (in their daily worship). That Avimukta is to be worshipped. He who knows this thus (the true nature of the Avimukta), imparts the wisdom of the Avimukta (that the individual Self is no other than the attributeless Brahman, to his disciples).

IV-4. ... **The mantra of liberation (namely 'Om') is (the essence of) the three Vedas; this he shall realize. It is Brahman and It is to be worshipped.** Indeed, so it is, O revered Yajnavalkya (said Janaka).

VI-2. Discarding all these, namely the threefold staff (of bamboo), the water pot, the sling (to carry personal effects), the (alms-)bowl, the cloth for purifying water (tied to the staff), tuft of hair and sacred thread in water (i.e. a reservoir) by reciting 'Bhuh Svaha', the Paramahamsa shall seek the Atman.

VI-3. Possessing a form as one just born (i.e. unclad), unaffected by the pairs (of opposites, such as heat and cold, pleasure and pain), accepting nothing (except bare sustenance), well established in the path of the truth of Brahman, of pure mind, receiving alms into the mouth (literally into the vessel of the belly) at the prescribed hour in order to sustain life, becoming equanimous at gain or loss (of alms), sheltering himself, without an abode (of his own), in an unoccupied house, a temple, a clump of (tall) grass (or a heap of straw), an anthill, the shade of a tree, a potter's hut, a cottage where sacred fire is kept, sandy bank of a river, a mountain thicket or cavity, a hollow in a tree, the vicinity of a water fall or a piece of clean ground; making no efforts (in any kind of gainful activity), free from 'mineness' (i.e. a sense of possessiveness), **ever meditating on Brahman, devoted to the Self,** ever intent on eradication of the good and bad karman, (the sage) finally gives up his body in the state of renunciation – (such a sage) is indeed a Paramahamsa. Thus (ends) the Upanishad.

Advaita Vedanta in Mudgala Upanishad

(cited by rAmAnuja)

III

The single God becoming many; unborn, is born as many. The Adhvaryus worship him as Agni. This as Yajus unites everything. The Samavedins worship as Saman. All is established in him. The serpents meditate on his as poison. The knowers of snake-lore as snake, gods as energy, men as wealth, Demons as Magic, the manes as sustenance. The knowers of the superhuman as superhuman. Gandharvas as beauty, Apsarases as perfume. **He becomes whatever he is worshipped as; so, one should think 'I am the supreme being' and will become that (who knows this).**

IV. ONLY BRAHMAN WITH THE THREEFOLD MISSING IS JIVA

Beyond the threefold misery, free from layers devoid of the six waves, other than the five sheaths, unaffected by the six transformations is the Brahman. The three miseries are Adhyatmika (body disease), Adhibhautika (robbers, wild animals etc.,) and Adhidaivika (rains etc.,). They relate to agents, action and effect; knower, knowledge and the known; experiencer, experience and the experienced. The six layers are skin, flesh, blood, bones, tendons and morrow. The six enemies are lust etc. The five sheaths are those of food, vital airs, mind cognition and bliss. The six transformations are: being, birth, growth, change, decline and destruction. The six waves are hunger, thirst, sorrow, delusion, old age and death. The six delusions are about family, lineage, class, caste, stations (ashrama) and forms. Through contact with the supreme spirit becomes the Jiva – he is none other.

Advaita Vedanta in Aruni (Aruneyi) Upanishad

(Commentary by Bhaskararaya, Commentary by Lakshmidhara (Laxmidhara), dipikA by nArAyaNa tIrtha)

3. Verily I am Brahman, the Sutra; the Sutra is Brahman for It originates (the cosmos); I myself am the sutra because I am a man of realisation – the wise one who has realised this should give up his triple holy thread. "I have renounced, I have renounced, I have renounced" – uttering this thrice he should declare – "From me there is no fear (in word, thought, or deed) to any being, for from me everything has proceeded". Uttering the Mantra – "That art my friend, so protect me (from cows, serpents, etc.), thou art strength and my friend, in all seen and unseen danger thou art the Thunder of the Lord of the Universe", etc., he should hold up high the bamboo staff and put on the loin-cloth. He should take food as if it were medicine, aye, as if it were medicine. Carefully guard (oh, ye all who are concerned) your chastity (in thought, word and deed), non-injury, non-acceptance of (superfluous) gifts, non-thieving and truthfulness – guard them by all means, aye, do guard !

Advaita Vedanta in Atma Upanishad

(dipikA by nArAyaNa tIrtha)

I-4. Next the supreme Self, the imperishable, He is to meditated on with (the help of) the Yogic steps, breath control, withdrawal (of sense organs), fixation (of mind), contemplation and concentration, He is to be inferred by the thinkers on the Self as like unto the seed of the Banyan tree or a grain of millet or a hundredth part of a split hair. (Thus) is He won and not known. He is not born, does not die, does not dry, is not wetted, not burnt, does not tremble, is not split, does not sweat. He is beyond the gunas, is spectator, is pure, partless, alone, subtle, owning naught, blemishless, immutable, devoid of sound, touch, colour, taste, smell, is indubitable, non-grasping, omnipresent. He is unthinkable and invisible. He purifies the impure, the unhallowed. He acts not. He is not subject to empirical existence.

II-1. The good named the Atman is pure, one and non-dual always, in the form of Brahman. Brahman alone shines forth.

II-2. Even as the world with its distinctions like affirmation, negation, etc., Brahman alone shines forth.

II-3. With distinctions like teacher and disciples (also), Brahman alone appears. From the point of view of truth, pure Brahman alone is.

II-4. Neither knowledge nor ignorance, neither the world nor aught else (is there).

What sets empirical life afoot is the appearance of the world as real.

II-5(a). What winds up empirical life is (its) appearance as unreal.

II-5(b)-6. What discipline is required to know, 'this is a pot', except the adequacy of the means of right knowledge ? Once it is given, the knowledge of the object (supervenes). The ever present Self shines when the means of Its cognition (is present).

II-7. Neither place nor time nor purity is required. The knowledge 'I am Devadatta' depends on nothing else.

II-8. Similarly, the knowledge 'I am Brahman' of the Knower of Brahman (is independent). Just as the whole world by the sun, by the splendour of the Knowledge of Brahman is everything illumined.

II-9-10(a). What can illumine the non-existent, and illusory, non-Self ? That which endows the Vedas, Shastras, Puranas and all other beings with import – that Knower what will illumine ?

II-10(b)-11. The child ignores hunger and bodily pain and plays with things. In the same way, the happy Brahman-Knower delights (in himself) without the sense of 'mine' and 'I'. Thus the silent sage, alive and alone, the embodiment of desirelessness, treats the objects of desire.

II-12. Existing as the Self of all, he is ever content abiding in his Self. Free from all wealth, he rejoices always: though companionless, he is mighty.

II-13. Though not eating, he is ever content, peerless he looks on all alike: though acting, he does nothing: though partaking of fruit, yet, he is no experiencer thereof.

II-14-17. Living in a body, he is still disembodied; though determinate, he is omnipresent; never is this Brahman-Knower, disembodied and ever existent, affected by the pleasant and the unpleasant or by the good and the evil. Because it appears to be encompassed by

Rahu (the darkness), the unencompassed sun is said to be encompassed by deluded men, not knowing the truth. Similarly, deluded folk behold the best of Brahman-Knowers, liberated from the bondage of body, etc., as though he is embodied, since he appears to have a body. The body of the liberated one remains like the shed Slough of the snake.

II-18. Moved a little, hither and thither, by the vital breath, (that body) is borne like a piece of timber, up and down, by the flood waters.

II-19-20. By fate is the body borne into contexts of experiences at appropriate times. (On the contrary) he who, giving up all migrations, both knowledge and unknowable, stays as the pure unqualified Self, is himself the manifest Shiva. He is the best of all Brahman-Knowers. In life itself the foremost Brahman-Knower is the ever free, he has accomplished his End.

II-21. All adjuncts having perished, being Brahman he is assimilated to the non-dual Brahman, like a man who, with (appropriate) apparels, is an actor and without them (resumes his natural state),

II-22(a). In the same way the best of Brahman-Knowers is always Brahman alone and none else.

II-22(b)-23. Just as space becomes space itself when the (enclosing) pot perishes, so, when particular cognitions are dissolved, the Brahman-Knower himself becomes nothing but Brahman, as milk poured into milk, oil into oil, and water into water become (milk, oil and water).

II-24(a). Just as, combined, they become one, so does the Atman-knowing sage in the Atman.

II-24(b). Thus disembodied liberation is the infinite status of Being.

II-25. Having won the status of Brahman, no longer is the Yogin reborn, for his ignorance-born bodies have all been consumed by the experimental knowledge of Being as the Self.

II-26-27(a). Because that Yogin has become Brahman, how can Brahman be reborn ? Bondage and liberation, set up by Maya, are not real in themselves in relation to the Self, just as the appearance and disappearance of the snake are not in relation to the stirless rope.

II-27(b). Bondage and liberation may be described as real and unreal and as due to the nescience (concealment of truth).

II-28-29. Brahman suffers from no concealment whatsoever. It is uncovered, there being nothing other than It (to cover It). The ideas, 'it is' and 'it is not', as regards Reality, are only ideas in the intellect. They do not pertain to the eternal Reality. So bondage and liberation are set up by Maya and do not pertain to the Self.

II-30. In the supreme Truth as in the sky, impartite, inactive, quiescent, flawless, unstained and non-dual where is room for (mental) construction ?

II-31. Neither suppression nor generation, neither the bond nor the striving: neither the liberty seeking nor the liberated – this is the metaphysical truth.

Advaita Vedanta in Sarvasara (Sarva-sara) Upanishad

(dipikA by nArAyaNa tIrtha)

1. Om. What is Bandha (bondage of the Soul) ? What is Moksha (liberation) ? What is Avidya (nescience) ? What is Vidya (knowledge) ? What are the states of Jagrat (waking), Svapna (dreaming) , Sushupti (Dreamless sleep), and the fourth, Turiya (Absolute) ? What are the Annamaya, Pranamaya, Manomaya, Vijnanamaya and Anandamaya Koshas (vestures or sheaths of the soul) ? What is the Karta (agent), what the Jiva (individual self), the Kshetrajna (knower of the body), the Sakshi (Witness), the Kutastha, the Antaryamin (Internal Ruler) ? What is the Pratyagatman (Inner Self), what the Paramatman (Supreme Self), the Atman, and also Maya ? — the master of Self looks upon the body and such like things other than the Self as Itself: this egoism is the bondage of the soul. The cessation of that (egoism) is Moksha, liberation. That which causes that egoism is Avidya, nescience. That by which this egoism is completely turned back is Vidya, knowledge. When the self, by means of its four and ten organs of sense beginning with the mind and benignly influenced by the sun and the rest which appear outside, perceives gross objects such as sound etc., then it is the Atman's Jagrat (wakeful) state. When, even in the absence of sound etc., (the self) not divested of desire for them, experiences, by means of the four organs, sound and the rest in the form of desires – then it is the Atman's state of Svapna (dream). When the four and ten organs cease from activity, and there is the absence of differentiated knowledge, then is the Atman's state of Sushupti (dreamless sleep).

2. When the essence of consciousness which manifests itself as the three states, is a witness of the states, (but is) itself devoid of states, positive or negative, and remains in the state of non-separation and oneness, then it is spoken of as the Turiya, the fourth. The aggregate of the six sheaths, which are the products of food, is called the Annamaya-kosha, alimentary sheath. When the fourteen kinds of Vayus beginning with the Prana, are in the alimentary sheath, then it is spoken of as the Pranamaya-kosha, vesture of the vital airs. When the Atman united with these two sheaths performs, by means of the four organs beginning with the mind, the functions of desire, etc., which have for their objects sound and the rest, then it (this state) is called the Manomaya-kosha, mental sheath. When the soul shines being united with these three sheaths, and cognisant of the differences and non-differences thereof then it is called the Vijnanamaya-kosha, sheath of intelligence. When these four sheaths remain in their own cause which is Knowledge (Brahman), in the same way as the latent Banyan tree remains in the Banyan seed, then it is spoken of as the Anandamaya-kosha, causal frame of the Soul. When it dwells in the body, as the seat of the idea of pleasure and pain, then it is the Karta, agent. The idea of pleasure is that which pertains to wished-for objects, and the idea of pain is that which pertains to undesirable objects. Sound, touch, sight, taste, and smell are the causes of pleasure and pain. When the soul, conforming itself to good

and bad actions, has made a link of the present body (with its past body), and is seen to be effecting a union, a connection as it were, with the body not yet received, then it is called the Jiva, individual soul, on account of its being limited by Upadhis. The five groups are those beginning with the mind, those beginning with the Prana, those beginning with the Sattva, those beginning with the will, and those beginning with merit. The ego possessing the attributes of these five groups, does not die out without the knowledge of the ever-attained Self. That which, owing to its proximity to the Self, appears as imperishable and is attributed to Atman, is called the Linga-sharira (subtle body), and the "heart's knot". The Consciousness which manifests itself therein is called the Kshetrajna, Knower of the Kshetra (body).

3. He who is the cogniser of the manifestation and disappearance of the knower, knowledge, and the knowable, but is himself devoid of such manifestation and disappearance, and is self-luminous, is called the Sakshi, Witness. When being perceived in an undifferentiated manner in the intelligence of all beings, from Brahma (the Creator) down to an ant, it resides in the intelligence of all beings, then it is called the Kutastha. When, standing as the means of realising the real nature of the Kutastha and others, which are differentiations by virtue of possessing limiting adjuncts, the Atman manifests itself as inter-woven in all bodies, like the thread through a string of jewels, then it is called the Antaryamin, Internal Ruler. When the Atman shines forth – absolutely free from all limiting adjuncts, brilliant, as a homogeneous mass of consciousness in its nature of pure Intelligence, independent – then, it is spoken of as the Entity of "Thou" (Tvam), and as the Pratyagatman, Inner-Self. (That which is) Satya (the Reality), Jnana (Knowledge), Ananta (the Infinite), Ananda (Bliss), is Brahman. The Reality is the indestructible; That which, when name, space, time, substance, and causation are destroyed, dies not, is the indestructible; and that is called Satya, the Reality. And Jnana – that essence of Intelligence which has no beginning and no end, spoken of as Jnana.

4. And Ananta, the Infinite, (remaining in the same manner) as (does) clay in modifications of clay, as gold in modifications of gold, as thread in fabrics of thread, the antecedent, all-pervading Consciousness, that is in all phenomena of creation beginning with the Unmanifested, is called the Infinite. And Ananda, Bliss – the essence of the consciousness of happiness, the ocean of measureless bliss, and the state of undifferentiated happiness is called Bliss. That, of which the above fourfold nature is an indication, and which is permanent in all space, time, substance, and causation, is called the Entity of "That" (Tat) Paramatman, Supreme Self, and Para-Brahman, or the Highest Brahman. Distinguished from the Entity of "Thou" (when it appears to be) possessed of attributes, as well as from the Entity of "That" (when it appears to be) possessed of attributes, that which is all-pervading like the sky, subtle, whole by itself, pure Existence, the Entity of "Art" (Asi). Self-luminous, is spoken of as the Atman; the Entity of "not-That", also is spoken of as Atman. That which is beginningless, fruitful, open to both proof and disproof, neither real nor unreal, nor real-unreal – non-existent, when, because of the immutability of its own substratum, the cause of change is ascertained; — existent when it is not so ascertained – (thus that) which is undefinable, is called Maya.

5. I am neither the body nor the ten senses, Buddhi, Mind, Ego. Without Prana and mind, pure, I am always the witness, pure consciousness, surely. I am neither the doer nor the enjoyer, only a witness to Prakriti. By my presence body etc., function as alive, still, eternal, ever joy, pure. I am Brahman to be known from all Vedanta, yet unknowable like sky and air. I am neither form nor action, only Brahman.

6. I am not body; birth, death do not come to me. I am not Prana – have no hunger and thirst; I am not mind – have no grief or delusion. I am not the doer – have no bondage or release.

Advaita Vedanta in Paramhansa Upanishad

(dipikA by nArAyaNa tIrtha)

1. "What is the path of the Paramahamsa Yogis, and what are their duties ?" – was the question Narada asked on approaching the Lord Brahma (the Creator). To him the Lord replied: **The path of the Paramahamsas that you ask of is accessible with the greatest difficulty by people; they have not many exponents, and it is enough if there be one such. Verily, such a one rests in the ever-pure Brahman; he is verily the Brahman inculcated in the Vedas – this is what the knowers of Truth hold; he is the great one, for he rests his whole mind always in Me; and I, too, for that reason, reside in him.** Having renounced his sons, friends, wife, and relations, etc., and having done away with the Shikha, the holy thread, the study of the Vedas, and all works, as well as this universe, he should use the Kaupina, the staff, and just enough clothes, etc., for the bare maintenance of his body, and for the good of all. And that is not final. If it is asked what this final is, it is as follows:

2. The Paramahamsa carries neither the staff, nor the hair-tuft, nor the holy thread nor any covering. He feels neither cold, nor heat, neither happiness nor misery, neither honour, nor contempt etc. It is meet that he should be beyond the reach of the six billows of this world-ocean. Having given up all thought of calumny, conceit, jealousy, ostentation, arrogance, attachment or antipathy to objects, joy and sorrow, lust, anger, covetousness, self-delusion, elation, envy, egoism, and the like, he regards his body as a corpse, as he has thoroughly destroyed the body-idea. **Being eternally free from the cause of doubt, and of misconceived and false knowledge, realising the Eternal Brahman, he lives in that himself, with the consciousness "I myself am He, I am That which is ever calm, immutable, undivided, of the essence of knowledge-bliss, That alone is my real nature."** That (Jnana) alone is his Shikha. That (Jnana) alone is his holy thread. Through the knowledge of the unity of the Jivatman with the Paramatman, the distinction between them is wholly gone too. This (unification) is his Sandhya ceremony.

3. He who relinquishing all desires has his supreme rest in the One without a second, and who holds the staff of knowledge, is the true Ekadandi. He who carries a mere wooden staff, who takes to all sorts of sense-objects, and is devoid of Jnana, goes to horrible hells known as the Maharauravas. Knowing the distinction between these two, he becomes a Paramahamsa.

4. The quarters are his clothing, he prostrates himself before none, he offers no oblation to the Pitris (manes), blames none, praises none – the Sannyasin is ever of independent will. For him there is no invocation to God, no valedictory ceremony to him; no Mantra, no meditation, no worship; to him is neither the phenomenal world nor That which is unknowable; he sees neither duality nor

does he perceive unity. He sees neither "I" nor 'thou", nor all this. The Sannyasin has no home. He should not accept anything made of gold or the like, he should not have a body of disciples, or accept wealth. If it be asked what harm there is in accepting them, (the reply is) yes, there is harm in doing so. Because if the Sannyasin looks at gold with longing, he makes himself a killer of Brahman; because if the Sannyasin touches gold with longing, he becomes degraded into a Chandala; because if he takes gold with longing, he makes himself a killer of the Atman. Therefore, the Sannyasin must neither look at, nor touch nor take gold, with longing. All desires of the mind cease to exist, (and consequently) he is not agitated by grief, and has no longing for happiness; renunciation of attachment to sense-pleasures comes, and he is everywhere unattached in good or evil, (consequently) he neither hates nor is elated. The outgoing tendency of all the sense-organs subsides in him who rests in the Atman alone. Realising "I am that Brahman who is the One Infinite Knowledge-Bliss" he reaches the end of his desires, verily he reaches the end of his desires.

Advaita Vedanta in Kaivalya Upanishad

(cited by Adi Sankara, vidyAraNya svAmI, dipikA by nArAyaNa tIrtha)

6 - "Brahman which is the source of all, pure, free from sorrow, beyond thoughts, unmanifested, many-formed (in association with thoughts), auspicious, tranquil, immortal, free from beginning middle and end, non-dual, all pervasive, formless and wonderful and which is consciousness and ananda."

16. That which is the Supreme Brahman, the soul of all, the great support of the universe, subtler than the subtle, and eternal – that is thyself, and thou art That.

17. "That which manifests the phenomena, such as the states of wakefulness, dream and profound sleep, I am that Brahman" – realising thus one is liberated from all bonds.

18. What constitute the enjoyable, the enjoyer, and the enjoyment, in the three abodes – different from them all am I, the Witness, the Pure Consciousness, the Eternal Good.

19. In me alone is everything born, in me does everything rest, and in me is everything dissolved. I am that Brahman, the secondless.

20. I am minuter than the minute, I am likewise the greatest of all, I am the manifold universe. I am the Ancient One, the Purusha and the Ruler, I am the Effulgent One, and the All-good.

21. Without arms and legs am I, of unthinkable power; I see without eyes, and I hear without ears. I know all, and am different from all. None can know me. I am always the Intelligence.

Advaita Vedanta in AdhyAtma Upanishad

1. Superimposition is the thought, 'I am and mine are the body, the senses, etc., which are all other than the Self. Through devotion to Brahman, the wise man should repudiate it.

2. Knowing oneself to be the subject, the witness of intellect and its operations, reject the idea of the Self being other than the subject, identifying the 'I' with that (the subject).

3. Rejecting conformity with the world, the body, and the Shastras, remove superimposition on the Self.

4. The mind of the Yogin perishes as he stays without intermission in the Self alone, knowing, through reasoning, Shruti, and experience, that one is the Self of all beings.

5. Without granting for a moment even a toe-hold for sleep, gossip, verbal exchanges, etc., and self-forgetfulness, meditate on the Self in the self.

6. Casting the body far aside, the offspring of parental exudations, as its status is no better than that of an outcast, and becoming Brahman, seek fulfillment.

7. Dissolve the self in the supreme Self as the pot-space is dissolved in infinite space; then, as the Infinite be silent for ever, O sage !

10. Knowing 'I am that Brahman' in which this world appearance (exists) like a city reflected in a mirror, find fulfillment, O sinless one !

19. All things from Brahma down to clumps of grass are nothing but unreal adjuncts. Distinct from the, see one's Self existing as the immutable plenum.

20. One's Self is Brahma, Vishnu, Indra and Shiva; this entire world is one's Self; other than this Self, there is nothing.

Advaita Vedanta in Atma Bodh Upanishad

(quoted by Adi Sankara in his viShNu sahasranama bhASya)

I-6-8. In the middle of the heart-lotus It (Brahman) exists with knowledge as the eye; the world, knowledge are established in Brahman. He, the seeker, departs from this world with this knowledge, getting all desires in the other world becomes immortal. Where there is always light and value, there the person attains immortality – Om Namah.

II-1-10. The Maya has gone away from me, I am the pure vision; my ego has gone down, so has the difference between world, god and soul. I am the inner-self, without positive and negative rules; I am the expansive Bliss; I am the witness, independent, exerting in my greatness; without old age and decay, opposing sides, pure knowledge, the ocean of liberation; I am subtle without any attributes.

I am without three qualities, all worlds exists in my belly; the changeless consciousness, beyond reason and action, I have no parts, unborn, pure reality.
I am endless knowledge, auspicious, indivisible, faultless, reality unbounded. I am to be known by Agamas, attractive to all the worlds. I am pure joy; purity, sole, ever shining, beginningless; I have ascertained the highest Truth.

I know myself without a second, with discrimination. Even then Bondage and Liberation are experienced. The world has gone away that appears to be real like serpent and rope; only Brahman exists as the basis of the world; therefore the world does not exist; like sugar pervaded by the taste of the sugarcane, I am pervaded by Bliss. All the three worlds, from Brahma to the smallest worm are imagined in me.

In the ocean there are many things, from the bubble to the wave; but the ocean does not desire these – So also, I have no desire for things of the world; I am like a rich-man not desiring poverty. A wise person abandons poison favouring Amrita. The sun which makes the pot shine is not destroyed along with the pot; so also the spirit is not destroyed with the body.

I have no bondage nor liberation, no Shastra, no Guru. I have gone beyond Maya – let life go away or let the mind be attacked – I have no misery as I am filled with joy, I know myself; Ignorance has run away somewhere – I have no doership nor duty, kula and gotra. These belong to the gross body, not to me different from it. Hunger, thirst, blindness, etc., belong to the Linga-deha only. Dullness, desire etc., belong only to the Karana-deha. Just as to an owl the sun is dark, so also for an ignorant person there is darkness in Brahman . When vision is blocked by clouds he thinks there is no sun. Just as Amrita, different from poison is not affected by its defects, I do not touch the defects of Inertia. Even a small lamp can remove big darkness; so even a little knowledge destroys big ignorance.

Just as there is no serpent in the rope at any time, there is no world in me.

Advaita Vedanta in Sarasvatl hradaya Upanishad

(accepted by advaitins, referred by H.H. Sri Abhinava Vidyateertha Mahaswami)

68. **A finite soul, the supreme God –**

These notions are to Me imputed.

They are not real – who knows this,

In truth, is free – doubt is there none.

This is the secret wisdom.

Advaita Vedanta in Yog Tatva Upanishad

9. How did that which is the seat of Paramatman, is eternal and above the state of all existing things and is of the form of wisdom and without stains attain the state of Jiva ?

10. A bubble arose in it as in water and in this (bubble) arose Ahankara. To it arose a ball (of body) made of the five (elements) and bound by Dhatus.

11. Know that to be Jiva which is associated with happiness and misery and hence is the term Jiva applied to Paramatman which is pure.

12-13. That Jiva is considered to be the Kevala (alone) which is freed from the stains of passion, anger, fear, delusion, greed, pride, lust, birth, death, miserliness, swoon, giddiness, hunger, thirst, ambition, shame, fright, heart-burning, grief and gladness.

Advaita Vedanta in NirvANa Upanishad

53. When the reality of Brahman shines in the self there is the annihilation of the phenomenal world which is enveloped by the power of Shiva (Maya); similarly the burning of the existence or non-existence of the aggregate of the causal, subtle and gross bodies.

External Links

Verses and incidents from Chandogya Upanishad, Mundaka Upanishad, Shvetashvatara Upanishad and Aitareya Upanishad

For more scriptural evidences, please
refer: http://www.vedantaadvaita.org/AdvaitaVedanta_3.htm

Please visit this link https://sites.google.com/site/advaitaenquiry/#trad

scroll down to 'The Upanishads' , click on 'From the Upanishads' (279 pages, 537 k)

Also read interpreting upanishads for further details

Another link which has lots of verses from many upanishads is http://akwri.webs.com/G102Adv.htm

You will need to scroll down until you see verses from Upanishads, starting from "Amritabindu Upanishad, verses 12-15:"

Conclusion

The more you dig into shastras, the more you will find the description and glories of both Saguna and Nirguna Brahman. At some places Ishwara is glorified, while attributeless Brahman is glorified at other places. After carefully studying shastras, i.e. shrutis (upanishads) and Smrutis (Gitas), one can come to only conclusion that God is both with form and formless and that Saguna and Nirguna Brahman are not different from each other. God with attributes represents Nirguna brahman just like national flag, a small piece of cloth represents entire country. An insult to National Flag is an insult to country. Just like by touching any one part of body, you touch whole person, so by having darshan of God Ishwara (Saguna Brahman), you are actually touching Nirguna Brahman.

Shastras teach us the unity of both, but we humans fight over trivial differences, which in reality are not present. Let us not waste more time in reading shastras to collect more proofs with an intention to wage a war. Let's read, understand, digest and apply them in day-2-day life and in meditation and attain moksha, the destination for which we have been given a rare human birth. Time is very short. Days are passing very fast. Yesterday will not return, time is will wait for anyone. So the future is in our hands. Lets make a proper use of invaluable time and dedicate our selves to the first and the foremost duty after getting human body - Self Realization. Let not this very purpose of getting birth in human body be defeated. It will be the defeat of our beloved Lord, who have decided and declared by giving us birth in human body that - You deserve to be one with me, You deserve Self Realization, You deserve to be free from cycle of births & deaths and attain Moksha. Not for our sake, but for the very sake of our beloved Bhagavan, let us selflessly, diligently, sincerely and regularly make attempts for our salvation with full faith and with total surrender, unconditional surrender is my humble prayer. May we all move beyond vaada-vivaada into the realm of truth is my humble prayer.

My koti-koti pranams and prostrations to Ishwara, Brahman, Param Gurus, to all disciples, devotees and seekers of truth.

A Devotee of devotee.

Aum

Indiaspirituality Blog - Amrut

A request to respected readers

Earlier, I have always studied shastras for my personal progress. But recently, I took time to search to prove something or to refute something. Ultimately, I am the loser, as after years of practice (I started when I was 18, now I am 31), I felt that I am sinking and these thoughts eat up time in meditation, which is not a good sign. Had somebody attacked me, I would not have bothered or would have quickly come out of it the next day. But since it attacks the very philosophy that I practice with full devotion, it hurts. The last thoughts are the first thoughts in meditation. I do not want others to spend time in neutralizing their mind. So I have with evidence from Shastras, mainly from Gita, which is a saara (essence) of Upanishads.

My request is that please do not waste time in refuting or arguing. It will only increase ego. The winner of debate is only one EGO. After writing all these, now I am relieved and can meditate freely without disturbance.

If someone believes that Krishna is the greatest, then so be it, let him spend more and more time with him. Let us advaitins keep thinking on brahman. If you find inconsistencies in various puranas and contradicting views, please ignore them.

e.g. Purely for explanation:

Srimad Bhagavad has 22 / 24 avatars. It has Balrama but not Laxman. It has buddha, who was not a vaishnav or maybe even not a hindu. Just ignore it. It is not needed for personal spiritual growth.

All paths are created by God to cover men of different prakruti. All are right in their place. For personal progress, there is no need to destroy, delete, or walk over other lines to make you line superior. All you have to do is, without touching the first line, make your line bigger than first one.

A request to Indians

Please read in your mother tongue or in indian languages. Many times english translations, specially the ones which are available on net sucks. Some take Unreal as asatya, some as mithyaa

satya = true, present at all times

asatya = false, not present at all times (like horn of rabbit)

mithya = illusion, temporary, one which is not true, but is experienced like (sea-shell as silver), water in desert, dream world. It can also be defined as one which is not present

everywhere at all times. e.g. Waking state is true and real only in waking state and not when you are in sleep and deep sleep.

I do not know where to fit 'unreal'. Probably, my english is very weak :)

In Bhaja Govindam, there is a word mudha (मुढ) used

Mudha is often translated as fool, some translate as you fool, you rascal.

The actual meaning of Mudha is the one whose consciousness is strongly embedded in physical body.

another word is ananya (अनन्य), which appears in Gita.

अनन्य = अ + अन्य

ananya = a + anya

anya means different

So ananya means not different

Words like 'Supreme personality of Godhead' and 'past times of Krishna' do not do justice to the words Bhagavan and Lila, which have indepth meaning. Bhagavan (Ishwara) is endowed with 6 upadhis.

I am not an authority on spirituality, so my views are personal views. I do not intend to hurt any faith or belief system. Please accept my apologies if I unintentionally did it. Everything was written from right spirituality with positive and calm mind.

A Humble Request: Adopt Nahi Ninda Nyaya

Paramacharya asks us to adopt Nani Ninda Nyaya

The purpose of exalting a particular deity over the another is not to depreciate the latter. The underlying idea is that a person who worships his chosen god has unflinching faith in him and becomes totally devoted to him. Such exclusive devotion is called "ananyabhakti". ***The idea here, however, is not to regard other devatas as inferior to one's own chosen deity- an example of "nahi ninda nyaya".***

Tarka Sastra (science of dialectics, logic and reasoning) proposes “nahi ninda nyay” to support one’s theory. Glorify your view, but that doesn’t mean that the other view is flawed.
With this nyaya, almost all contradictions can be neutralized, even Ramanujas also at times adopt this nyaya

Some quotes from Ramanujas, though the person representing may not be authentic, it reflects the peace loving nature adn wish to neutralize contradictions and doubts.

Srimath Ramayanam is considered most authentic by our Poorvacharyas and only out of 'Nahi Ninda Nyaya' Srimath Ramayana was compared against Trivaimozhi in Acharya Hrudayam by Sri Azagiya Perumal Nayanar. Further, Sri Pillai Lokacharya consisred "Srimad Ramayana" and Mahabharatha" as more authentic than Puranas and between the 2,

Srimad Ramayana was considered even more authentic. You mentioned about Simad Ramayana and Sri Ramanuja. In Ramanuja Noortrandhadi, It is mentioned that Sri Ramanuja took to his heart the inner meanings of Srimath Ramayana.(Padi konda keerthi, Ramayanam ennum...)
source

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Lokacharya Panchasat Shloka 33

tvayi vilasati ra~Nge sheShatalpena pumsA
        jagati guruvara shrIdR^iShTipUrAbhiShikte |
kathamiva bhuvanArya tvAm vinAnyam bhajante
        sati dinakarabimbe ke pradIpam vahanti ||
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Meaning:

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bhuvanArya guruvara             - O Lokacharya who is best amongst acharyas.
tvayi vilasati                  - When you are shining
ra~Nge                          - in Srirangam,
shrIdR^iShTipUra abhiShikte     - washed by the merciful flood from the eyes
sheShatalpena pumsA             - of the Lord who rests on the bed of Adisesha,
tvAm vinA                       - leaving you
kathamiva (janA:) bhajante      - how will (people) seek
anyam                           - another?
dinakarabimbe sati              - When Sunlight is there
ke pradIpam vahanti             - will anyone carry a lamp?
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Vyakhyana Saram:

In this shloka, Desikan states that Pillai Lokacharyar is like a Sun compared to others. Again, this is not to put down other acharyas, but to praise Lokacharyar ("nahi nindA nyAya"). In our sampradhayam, our Azhvars and Acharyas have been called the Sun, because, just as the Sun removes the external darkness, they were born and removed the internal darkness. Azhvar is called "vakuLa bhUShaNa bhAskara"; Thirumangai Azhvar is called "loka divAkara"; Ramanuja is called "rAmAnuja divAkara:". Desikan says that with this Sun present, why seek anyone else?

Vedanta Desikan Thiruvadigale Sharanam
Pillai Lokacharyar Thiruvadigale Sharanam
Azhvar Emberumanar Jeeyar Thiruvadigale Sharanam

source

Sri Parasara Bhatta used to say that if one must seek refuge of our Lord, among the dasavathara,Varaha is the most perfect choice. Based on the "nahi ninda nyaya" (not denigrating others) he is reported to have said: Matsya avathara is sea bound so it cant extricate us from the sea of samsara. Koorma is itself pushed down into the sea by a mountain. Nrisimha is different above and below the neck so not to be resorted to. Vamana took over the three worlds by stratagem of showing tiny feet and then growing to gigantic proportions. Parasurama was rage personified. Rama(Bhattar's favourite in fact!) lost His wife for ten months. Balarama was too fond of drinking. Krishna, His wife Andal says, was always lying. We haven't seen Kalki yet. So Varaha, who without any shame(manam illa panri) took on the form of a boar and jumped into the dirty sludge and brought out Bhuma devi, is the one to be resorted to. Similarly He will extricate us from the "bheemabhavaarnavodare" the belly of the deep and dangerous ocean of existence.

It must be remembered that it was Varaha Perumal who gave the first guarantee that He would safely steer the prapanna to safety. Varaha charma sloka

Stiththe manasi suswasthe sharire sathiyo narah...

"Ye men if you realise and remember with all your humors in harmony, that I am the Cosmos and Unborn when you are "mens sana in corpore sana", then when death is iminent and you are like wood and stone, I will remember my bhakta, devotee, and take him to the highest abode, paramapada."

It was this very Varaha who taught the easiest way to attain Him to Bhudevi. She repeated it to us when She took birth as Periazhwar's daughter, "Thoozhomai vandhu toomalar thoovi thozhudu, vayinaal padi manthinaal chinthithu pozha piyaiyum pukuthurvan ninavaiyum thiyinil thoosaakum ". If we come sanctfied, offering pure flowers, pay obeisance, sing with our mouths and think in our minds, the past transgressions and those that still stand will disappear like cotton in a fire.

Sri Ambujavalli sametha Sri Bhoovarahaswamy Parabrahmane namo namah.

Dr.S.Sundar Rajan MS ortho

Trichy 22 Sep 2010.

source 1, source 2

Let us all live in peace and harmony adopting Nahi Ninda Nyaya

Hari OM

BRAHMAN IN UPANISHADS

Om ! That (Brahman) is infinite, and this (universe) is infinite.

The infinite proceeds from the infinite.

(Then) taking the infinitude of the infinite (universe),

It remains as the infinite (Brahman) alone.

Om ! Peace ! Peace ! Peace !

Brahman and Creation

BrihadAraNyaka Upanishad:

I-iv-9: They say: Men think, 'Through the knowledge of Brahman we shall become all'. Well, what did that Brahman know by which It became all ?

I-iv-10: This (self) was indeed Brahman in the beginning. It knew only Itself as, 'I am Brahman'. Therefore It became all. And whoever among the gods knew It also became That; and the same with sages and men. The sage Vamadeva, while realising this (self) as That, knew, 'I was Manu, and the sun'. And to this day whoever in like manner knows It as, 'I am Brahman', becomes all this (universe). Even the gods cannot prevail against him, for he becomes their self. While he who worships another god thinking, 'He is one, and I am another', does not know. He is like an animal to the gods. As many animals serve a man, so does each man serve the gods. Even if one animal is taken away, it causes anguish, what should one say of many animals ? Therefore it is not liked by them that men should know this.

II-iii-5: Now the subtle – it is (the corporeal) air and the ether that is in the body. It is immortal, it is unlimited, and it is undefined. The essence of that which is subtle, immortal, unlimited and undefined is this being that is in the right eye, for this is the essence of the undefined.

Bhagavad Gita - Undescructive Brahman and Creatino of Universe.

भूतग्रामः स एवायं भूत्वा भूत्वा प्रलीयते।

रात्र्यागमेऽवशः पार्थ प्रभवत्यहरागमे।।8.19।।

English translation by Swami Gambhirananda

8.19 O son of Prtha, after being born again and again, that very multitude of beings disappears in spite of itself at the approach of night. It comes to life at the approach of day.

Sanskrit commentary by Sri Sankaracharya

-- भूतग्रामः भूतसमुदायः स्थावरजङ्गमलक्षणः यः पूर्वस्मिन् कल्पे आसीत् स एव अयं नान्यः। भूत्वा भूत्वा अहरागमे, प्रलीयते पुनः पुनः रात्र्यागमे अहनः क्षये अवशः अस्वतन्त्र एव, हे पार्थ, प्रभवति जायते अवश एव अहरागमे।।यत् उपन्यस्तम् अक्षरम्, तस्य प्राप्त्युपायो निर्दिष्टः 'ओमित्येकाक्षरं ब्रह्म (गीता 8।13)' इत्यादिना। अथ इदानीम् अक्षरस्यैव स्वरूपनिर्दिदिक्षया इदम् उच्यते, अनेन योगमार्गेण इदं गन्तव्यमिति -- ।।8.19।।

Hindi translation by Sri Harikrishandas Goenka (on Sri Sankaracharya's Sanskrit Commentary)

न किये कर्मोंका फल मिलना और किये हुए कर्मोंका फल न मिलना, इस दोषका परिहार करनेके लिये, बन्धन और मुक्तिका मार्ग बतलानेवाले शास्त्रवाक्योंकी सफलता दिखानेके लिये और 'अविद्यादि पञ्च-क्लेशमूलक कर्मसंस्कारोंके वशमें पड़कर पराधीन हुआ प्राणी-समुदाय बारंबार उत्पन्न हो-होकर लय हो जाता है' -- इस प्रकारके कथनसे संसारमें वैराग्य दिखलानेके लिये यह कहते हैं -- जो पहले कल्पमें था, वही -- दूसरा नहीं -- यह स्थावर-जङ्गमरूप भूतोंका समुदाय ब्रह्माके दिनके आरम्भमें, बारंबार उत्पन्न हो-होकर दिनकी समाप्ति और रात्रिका प्रवेश होनेपर पराधीन हुआ ही बारंबार लय होता जाता है और फिर उसी प्रकार विवश होकर दिनके प्रवेशकालमें पुनः उत्पन्न होता जाता है ।।8.19।।

English translation by Swami Gambhirananda (on Sri Sankaracharya's Sanskrit Commentary)

8.19 O son of Prtha, bhutva, after being born again and again at the approach of day; sah eva, that very-not any other; bhutagramah, multitude of beings, consisting of the moving and the non-moving objects that existed in the earlier cycle of creation; praliyate, disappears repeatedly; avasah, in spinte of itself, For they are impelled by their own defects without any independence whatever; ratri-agame, at the approach of night, at the close of the day. Prabhavati, it comes to life, verily in spite of itself; ahar-agame, at the approach of day.The means for the attainment of that Immutable which was introduced has been pointed out in, 'He who departs by leaving the body while uttering the single syllable, viz Om, which is Brahman, ' etc. (13). Now, with a vies to indicating the real nature of that very Immutable, this is being said-that It is to be reached through this path of yoga:

Also Refer B.G. 8.20

Brahman as substratum of all

BrihadAraNyaka Upanishad:

I-vi-1: This (universe) indeed consists of three things: name, form and action. Of those names, speech (sound in general) is the Uktha (source), for all names spring from it. It is

their Saman (common feature), for it is common to all names. It is their Brahman (self), for it sustains all names.

I-vi-2: Now of forms the eye (anything visible) is the Uktha (source), for all forms spring from it. It is their Saman (common feature), for it is common to all forms. It is their Brahman (self), for it sustains all forms.

Different Levels of Truths

BrihadAraNyaka Upanishad:

II-iii-1: Brahman has but two forms – gross and subtle, mortal and immortal, limited and unlimited, defined and undefined.

II-iii-2: The gross (form) is that which is other than air and the ether. It is mortal, it is limited, and it is defined. The essence of that which is gross, mortal, limited and defined is the sun that shines, for it is the essence of the defined.

II-iii-3: Now the subtle – it is air and the ether. It is immortal, it is unlimited, and it is undefined. The essence of that which is subtle, immortal, unlimited and undefined is the being that is in the sun, for that is the essence of the undefined. This is with reference to the gods.

II-iii-4: Now with reference to the body: the gross form is but this – what is other than (the corporeal) air and the ether that is in the body. It is mortal, it is limited and it is defined. The essence of that which is gross, mortal, limited and defined is the eye, for it is the essence of the defined.

II-iii-5: Now the subtle – it is (the corporeal) air and the ether that is in the body. It is immortal, it is unlimited, and it is undefined. The essence of that which is subtle, immortal, unlimited and undefined is this being that is in the right eye, for this is the essence of the undefined.

II-iii-6: The form of that 'being' is as follows: like a cloth dyed with turmeric, or like grey sheep's wool, or like the (scarlet) insect called Indragopa, or like a tongue of fire, or like a white lotus, or like a flash of lightning. He who knows it as such attains splendour like a flash of lightning. Now therefore the description (of Brahman): 'Not this, not this'. Because there is no other and more appropriate description than this 'Not this'. **Now Its name: 'The Truth of truth'. The vital force is truth, and It is the Truth of that.**

Brahman as All

BrihadAraNyaka Upanishad:

II-iv-14: Because when there is duality, as it were, then one smells something, one sees something, one hears something, one speaks something, one thinks something, one knows something. (But) when to the knower of Brahman everything has become the self, then what should one smell and through what, what should one see and through what, what should one hear and through what, what should one speak and through what, what should one think and through what, what should one know and through what ? Through what should one know That owing to which all this is known – through what, O Maitreyi, should one know the Knower ?

II-v-1: This earth is (like) honey to all beings, and all beings are (like) honey to this earth. (The same with) the shining immortal being who is in this earth, and the shining, immortal, corporeal being in the body. (These four) are but this Self. This (Self-knowledge) is (the means of) immortality; this (underlying unity) is Brahman; this (knowledge of Brahman) is (the means of becoming) all.

II-v-2: This water is (like) honey to all beings, and all beings are (like) honey to this water. (The same with) the shining immortal being who is in this water, and the shining, immortal being identified with the seed in the body. (These four) are but this Self. This (Self-knowledge) is (the means of) immortality; this (underlying unity) is Brahman; this (knowledge of Brahman) is (the means of becoming) all.

II-v-3: This fire is (like) honey to all beings, and all beings are (like) honey to this fire. (The same with) the shining immortal being who is in this fire, and the shining, immortal being identified with the organ of speech in the body. (These four) are but this Self. This (Self-knowledge) is (the means of) immortality; this (underlying unity) is Brahman; this (knowledge of Brahman) is (the means of becoming) all.

II-v-4: This air is (like) honey to all beings, and all beings are (like) honey to this air. (The same with) the shining immortal being who is in this air, and the shining, immortal being who is the vital force in the body. (These four) are but this Self. This (Self-knowledge) is (the means of) immortality; this (underlying unity) is Brahman; this (knowledge of Brahman) is (the means of becoming) all.

II-v-5: This sun is (like) honey to all beings, and all beings are (like) honey to this sun. (The same with) the shining immortal being who is in this sun, and the shining, immortal being identified with the eye in the body. (These four) are but this Self. This (Self-knowledge) is (the means of) immortality; this (underlying unity) is Brahman; this (knowledge of Brahman) is (the means of becoming) all.

II-v-6: These quarters is (like) honey to all beings, and all beings are (like) honey to these quarters. (The same with) the shining immortal being who is these quarters, and the shining, immortal being identified with the ear and with the time of hearing in the body. (These four) are but this Self. This (Self-knowledge) is (the means of) immortality; this

(underlying unity) is Brahman; this (knowledge of Brahman) is (the means of becoming) all.

II-v-7: This moon is (like) honey to all beings, and all beings are (like) honey to this moon. (The same with) the shining immortal being who is in this moon, and the shining, immortal being identified with the mind in the body. (These four) are but this Self. This (Self-knowledge) is (the means of) immortality; this (underlying unity) is Brahman; this (knowledge of Brahman) is (the means of becoming) all.

II-v-8: This lightning is (like) honey to all beings, and all beings are (like) honey to this lightning. (The same with) the shining immortal being who is in this lightning, and the shining, immortal being identified with light in the body. (These four) are but this Self. This (Self-knowledge) is (the means of) immortality; this (underlying unity) is Brahman; this (knowledge of Brahman) is (the means of becoming) all.

II-v-9: This cloud is (like) honey to all beings, and all beings are (like) honey to this cloud. (The same with) the shining immortal being who is in this cloud, and the shining, immortal being identified with sound and voice in the body. (These four) are but this Self. This (Self-knowledge) is (the means of) immortality; this (underlying unity) is Brahman; this (knowledge of Brahman) is (the means of becoming) all.

II-v-10: This ether is (like) honey to all beings, and all beings are (like) honey to this ether. (The same with) the shining immortal being who is in this ether, and the shining, immortal being identified with the ether in the heart, in the body. (These four) are but this Self. This (Self-knowledge) is (the means of) immortality; this (underlying unity) is Brahman; this (knowledge of Brahman) is (the means of becoming) all.

II-v-11: This righteousness (Dharma) is (like) honey to all beings, and all beings are (like) honey to this righteousness. (The same with) the shining immortal being who is in this righteousness, and the shining, immortal being identified with righteousness in the body. (These four) are but this Self. This (Self-knowledge) is (the means of) immortality; this (underlying unity) is Brahman; this (knowledge of Brahman) is (the means of becoming) all.

II-v-12: This truth is (like) honey to all beings, and all beings are (like) honey to this truth. (The same with) the shining immortal being who is in this truth, and the shining, immortal being identified with truth in the body. (These four) are but this Self. This (Self-knowledge) is (the means of) immortality; this (underlying unity) is Brahman; this (knowledge of Brahman) is (the means of becoming) all.

II-v-13: This human species is (like) honey to all beings, and all beings are (like) honey to this human species. (The same with) the shining immortal being who is in this human species, and the shining, immortal being identified with the human species in the body. (These four) are but this Self. This (Self-knowledge) is (the means of) immortality; this (underlying unity) is Brahman; this (knowledge of Brahman) is (the means of becoming) all.

II-v-14: This (cosmic) body is (like) honey to all beings, and all beings are (like) honey to this (cosmic) body. (The same with) the shining immortal being who is in this (cosmic)

body, and the shining, immortal being who is this (individual) self. (These four) are but this Self. This (Self-knowledge) is (the means of) immortality; this (underlying unity) is Brahman; this (knowledge of Brahman) is (the means of becoming) all.

II-v-15: This Self, already mentioned, is the ruler of all beings, and the king of all beings. Just as all the spokes are fixed in the nave and the felloe of a chariot-wheel, so are all beings, all gods, all worlds, all organs and all these (individual) selves fixed in this Self.

Definition of Purusha

BrihadAraNyaka Upanishad:

II-v-18: This is that meditation on things mutually helpful which Dadhyac, versed in the Atharva-Veda, taught the Asvins. Perceiving this the Rishi said, 'He made bodies with two feet and bodies with four feet. That supreme Being first entered the bodies as a bird (the subtle body).' **On account of his dwelling in all bodies, He is called the Purusha.** There is nothing that is not covered by Him, nothing that is not pervaded by Him.

NirguNa Brahman as Ishvara

Bhagavad Gita says

अव्यक्ताद्व्यक्तयः सर्वाः प्रभवन्त्यहरागमे।
रात्र्यागमे प्रलीयन्ते तत्रैवाव्यक्तसंज्ञके।।8.18।।

English translation by Swami Gambhirananda

8.18 With the coming of day all manifested things emerge from the Unmanifest and when night comes they merge in that itself which is called the Unmanifested.

Sanskrit commentary by Sri Sankaracharya

-- अव्यक्तात् अव्यक्तं प्रजापतेः स्वापावस्था तस्मात् अव्यक्तात् व्यक्तयः व्यज्यन्त इति व्यक्तयः स्थावरजङ्गमलक्षणाः सर्वाः प्रजाः प्रभवन्ति अभिव्यज्यन्ते, अहनः आगमः अहरागमः तस्मिन् अहरागमे काले ब्रह्मणः प्रबोधकाले। तथा रात्र्यागमे ब्रह्मणः स्वापकाले प्रलीयन्ते सर्वाः व्यक्तयः तत्रैव पूर्वोक्ते अव्यक्तसंज्ञके।।अकृताभ्यागमकृतविप्रणाशदोषपरिहारार्थम्, बन्धमोक्षशास्त्रप्रवृत्तिसाफल्यप्रदर्शनार्थम् अविद्यादिक्लेशमूलकर्माशयवशाच्च अवशः भूतग्रामः भूत्वा भूत्वा प्रलीयते इत्यतः संसारे वैराग्यप्रदर्शनार्थं च इदमाह -- ।।8.18।।

Hindi translation by Sri Harikrishandas Goenka (on Sri Sankaracharya's Sanskrit Commentary)

प्रजापतिके दिनमें और रात्रिमें जो कुछ होता है उसका वर्णन किया जाता है -- दिनके आरम्भकालका नाम 'अहरागम' है, ब्रह्माके दिनके आरम्भकालमें अर्थात् ब्रह्माके प्रबोधकालमें अव्यक्तसे -- प्रजापतिकी निद्रावस्थासे समस्त व्यक्तियाँ -- स्थावर-जङ्गमरूप समस्त प्रजाएँ उत्पन्न होती हैं -- प्रकट होती हैं। जो व्यक्त-प्रकट होती है, उसका नाम व्यक्ति है। तथा रात्रिके आनेपर -- ब्रह्माके शयन करनेके समस्त उस पूर्वोक्त अव्यक्त नामक प्रजापतिकी निद्रावस्थामें ही समस्त प्राणी लीन हो जाते हैं ।।8.18।।

English translation by Swami Gambhirananda (on Sri Sankaracharya's Sanskrit Commentary)

8.18 Ahar-agame, with the coming of day, at the time when Brahma wakes; sarvah vyaktayah, all manifested things, all things that get manifested, all creatures characterized as moving and non-moving; prabhavanti, emerge, become manifested; avyaktat, from the Unmanifested-avyakta (Unmanifested) is the state of sleep of Prajapati; from that avyakta. Similarly, ratri-agame, when night comes, at the time when Brahma sleeps; praliyante, they, all the manifested things, merge; tatra eva, in that itself; avyakta-sanjnake, which is called the Unmanifested referred to above.In order to obviate the defect of the emergence of some unmerited result and the destruction of merited results; The following verse says that the very same multitude of beings continues in the different cycles of creation, and there-fore these two defects do not arise. for pointing out the meaningfulness of the scriptures For the earlier reason the scriptures do not lose their validity. dealing with bondage and Liberation; and with a view to propounding detachment from the world on the ground that the helpless multitude of beings perishes after being born again and again under the influence of accumulated results of actions that have for their origin such evils as ignorance etc. The five evils are: ignorance, egoism, attachment, aversion and clinging to life. (See P. Y. Su. 2.3), the Lord says this:

Self is Brahman

BrihadAraNyaka Upanishad:

II-v-15: This Self, already mentioned, is the ruler of all beings, and the king of all beings. Just as all the spokes are fixed in the nave and the felloe of a chariot-wheel, so are all beings, all gods, all worlds, all organs and all these (individual) selves fixed in this Self.

II-v-19: This is that meditation on things mutually helpful which Dadhyac, versed in the Atharva-Veda, taught the Asvins. Perceiving this the Rishi said, `(He) transformed Himself in accordance with each form; that form of His was for the sake of making Him known. The Lord on account of Maya (notions superimposed by ignorance) is perceived as manifold, for to Him are yoked ten organs, nay, hundreds of them. He is the organs; He is ten and thousands – many and infinite. That Brahman is without prior or posterior, without interior or exterior. **This self, the perceiver of everything, is Brahman. This is the teaching.**

2 Brahmans | Two Brahmans | Two levels of the unmenifested

Refer Br. Up. II-iii-6

Bhagavad Gita

परस्तस्मात्तु भावोऽन्योऽव्यक्तोऽव्यक्तात्सनातनः।

यः स सर्वेषु भूतेषु नश्यत्सु न विनश्यति।।8.20।।

English translation by Swami Gambhirananda

8.20 But distinct from that Unmanifested is the other eternal unmainfest Reality, who does not get destroyed when all beings get destroyed.

Sanskrit commentary by Sri Sankaracharya

-- परः व्यतिरिक्तः भिन्नः; कुतः? तस्मात् पूर्वोक्तात्। तु-शब्दः अक्षरस्य विवक्षितस्य अव्यक्तात् वैलक्षण्यविशेषणार्थः। भावः अक्षराख्यं परं ब्रह्म। व्यतिरिक्तत्वे सत्यपि सालक्षण्यप्रसङ्गोऽस्तीति तद्विनिवृत्त्यर्थम् आह -- अन्यः इति। अन्यः विलक्षणः। स च अव्यक्तः अनिन्द्रियगोचरः। 'परस्तस्मात्' इत्युक्तम्; कस्मात् पुनः परः? पूर्वोक्तात् भूतग्रामबीजभूतात् अविद्यालक्षणात् अव्यक्तात्। अन्यः विलक्षणः भावः इत्यभिप्रायः। सनातनः चिरन्तनः यः सः भावः सर्वेषु भूतेषु ब्रह्मादिषु नश्यत्सु न विनश्यति। ।।8.20।।

Hindi translation by Sri Harikrishandas Goenka (on Sri Sankaracharya's Sanskrit Commentary)

जिस अक्षरका पहले प्रतिपादन किया था उसकी प्राप्तिका उपाय 'ओमित्येकाक्षरं ब्रह्म' इत्यादि कथनसे बतला दिया। अब उसी अक्षरके स्वरूपका निर्देश करनेकी इच्छासे यह बतलाया जाता है कि 'इस योगमार्गद्वारा अमुक वस्तु मिलती है' -- 'तु' शब्द यहाँ आगे वर्णन किये जानेवाले अक्षरकी उस पूर्वोक्त अव्यक्तसे विलक्षणता दिखलानेके लिये है। (वह अव्यक्त) भाव यानी अक्षरनामक परब्रह्म परमात्मा अत्यन्त भिन्न है। किससे? उस पहले कहे हुए अव्यक्त से। भिन्न होनेपर भी किसी प्रकार समानता हो सकती है? इस शंकाकी निवृत्तिके लिये कहते हैं कि वह इन्द्रियोंसे प्रत्यक्ष न होनेवाला अव्यक्तभाव अन्य -- दूसरा है अर्थात् सर्वथा विलक्षण है। उससे पर है ऐसा कहा, सो किससे पर है? वह उस पूर्वोक्त भूत-समुदायके बीजभूत अविद्यारूप अव्यक्तसे परे है। ऐसा जो सनातन भाव अर्थात् सदासे होनेवाला भाव है, वह ब्रह्मादि समस्त प्राणियोंका नाश होनेपर भी नष्ट नहीं होता ।।8.20।।

English translation by Swami Gambhirananda (on Sri Sankaracharya's Sanskrit Commentary)

8.20 He is parah, distinct, different;-From what?-tasmat, from that aforesaid (Unmanifested).The word tu, but, is meant for showing the distinction of the Immutable that is going to be spoken of from the Unmanifested.He is bhavah, the Reality, the supreme Brahman called the Immutable. Even though different, there is the possibility of similarlity of characteristics. Hence, for obviating this the Lord says: anyah, the other, of a different characteristic, and He is the Immutable which is beyond the range of the organs. It has been said that He is distinct from that. From what, again is He distinct? Avyaktat, from the Unmaifested spoken of earlier, which is the seed of the multitude of beings, and which is characterized as ignorance (avidya) Ast. adds, 'anyah vilaksanah, bhavah ityabhiprayah: The meaning is that the Reality is different and distinct (form that Unmanifested).-Tr. He is sanatnah, eternal.Bhavah, the Reality; yah sah, who is such; na, does not; vinasyati, get destroyed; when sarvesu bhutesu, all beings, beginning from Brahma; nasyatsu, get destroyed.

Please refer B.G. 8.18-20 to understand process of creation.

CONCEPTS OF ADVAITA IN SHASTRAS

Updated on: 20-Feb-2023
Gave correct references of Kapila Gita. Shloka Nos of Kapila Gita (KG) are that of Kapila Gita Sara, shlokas selected by Swami Tejomayananda. Shloka Nos of corresponding Bhagavat Purana are also given.

Brahman

Br. Up - II-iii-6: The form of that 'being' is as follows: like a cloth dyed with turmeric, or like grey sheep's wool, or like the (scarlet) insect called Indragopa, or like a tongue of fire, or like a white lotus, or like a flash of lightning. He who knows it as such attains splendour like a flash of lightning. **Now therefore the description (of Brahman): 'Not this, not this'. Because there is no other and more appropriate description than this 'Not this'.** Now Its name: 'The Truth of truth'. The vital force is truth, and It is the Truth of that.

The self, devoid of sins" (Chhandogya Upanishad 8.7.1.),

"The Brahman that is immediate and direct" (Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad 3.4.1.),

"That which is beyond hunger and thirst" (Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad 3.5.1.),

"Not-this, not-this" (Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad 2.3.6.),

"Neither gross nor subtle" (Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad 3.8.8.),

"This Self is not-this" (Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad 3.9.26.),

"It is the Seer Itself unseen" (Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad 3.8.11.),

"Knowledge-Bliss" (Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad sloka 7, unter 3.9.27.),

"Existence-Knowledge-Infinite" (Taittiriya Upanishad 2.1.),

"Imperceptible, bodiless" (Taittiriya Upanishad 2.7.),

"That great unborn Self" (Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad 4.4.22.),

"Without the vital force and the mind" (Mundaka Upanishad 2.1.2.),

"Unborn, comprising the interior and exterior" (Mundaka Upanishad 2.1.2.),

"Consisting of knowledge only" (Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad 2.4.12.),

"Without interior or exterior" (Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad 2.5.19),

"It is verily beyond what is known as also what is unknown" (Kena Upanishad 1.3.),

and „Called Akasa (the self-effulgent one)" (Chhandogya Upanishad 8.14.1.);

and also through such Smrti texts as the following:

"It neither born nor dies‟ (Bhagavad Gita 2.20.),

"It is not affected by anybody's sins‟ (Bhagavad Gita 5.15.),

"Just as air is always in the ether‟ Bhagavad Gita 9.6.),

"The individual Self should be regarded as the universal one‟ (Bhagavad Gita 13.2.),

"It is called neither existent nor nonexistent‟ (Bhagavad Gita 13.12.),

"As the Self is beginningless and devoid of qualities‟ (Bhagavad Gita 13.31.),

"The same in all beings” (Bhagavad Gita 13.27.), and

"The Supreme Being is different” (Bhagavad Gita 15.17)

Source: Upadesha Sahasri of Sri Adi Shankara.

Brahman is nirAkAra

Kaivalya Upanishad says,

20. I am minuter than the minute, I am likewise the greatest of all, I am the manifold universe. I am the Ancient One, the Purusha and the Ruler, I am the Effulgent One, and the All-good - Kaivalya Up-20

21. Without arms and legs am I, of unthinkable power; I see without eyes, and I hear without ears. I know all, and am different from all. None can know me. I am always the Intelligence - Kaivalya Up-21

nirguNa Brahman is higher than saguNa Brahman

Svetasvatara Upanishads says:

III-7: Higher than this Personal Brahman is the infinite Supreme Brahman, who is concealed in all beings according to their bodies, and who, though remaining single, envelops the whole universe. Knowing him to be the Lord, one becomes immortal. Sv .Up. 3.7

nirguNa Brahman peaceful

Svetasvatara Upanishads says:

IV-14: One attains infinite peace when one realizes that Blissful One who is subtler than the subtlest, who creates the world in the midst of chaos, who assumes various forms, and who is the only one that encompasses the universe. - Sv. Up 4.14

Snake-rope example in Minor upanishads

It is always good to quote from Upanishads commented by Adi shankara and other pUrvAcArya-s. However, there are many upanishads within 108 upanishads. these are accepted by Kanchi Math and Shrigeri Math. however the study is optional and left to individual. Emphasis is principle upanishads. This does not mean that other upanishads are of little authority or of no use. they are gems in their own right. Sincere seekers will surely benefit from them. Lets study some verses from 108 upanishads.

Snake Rope example is not found in 10 principle upanishad, but it is found in many minor upanishads and in bhAgavat PUrANa (Srimad Bhagavatam)

Snake-rope analogy in Minor Upanishads

II.26-27(a). Because that Yogin has become Brahman, how can Brahman be reborn ? Bondage and liberation, set up by Maya, are not real in themselves in relation to the Self, just as the appearance and disappearance of the snake are not in relation to the stir-less rope. - Atma Upanishad

V.76-98. When the blueness of the sky really exists in it, then the universe really is. When the silver in mother-of pearl can be used in making an ornament, when a man is bitten by (the conception of) a snake in a rope,..." - Tejo Bindu Upanishad

IV-10. (The whole world) is superimposed on the supreme Reality, the Ground, as the snake is on the rope. No curiosity is aroused as regards these superimposed wonders.- Annapurna Upanishad

79. Like the conception of the snake in a rope, so the idea of the release from life and Samsara is the delusion of time. - Yoga Kundalini Upanishad

14. (25) Ignorance is the illusory knowledge – like that of the snake in the rope – of

Brahman that is All in all, all-pervasive and non-dual. (This illusory knowledge) is associated with a plurality of selves based on the plurality of the adjuncts of bondage and liberation, viz.; stations in life, castes, men, women, the immobiles, mankind, (lower) animals and gods. - NirAlamba upanishad

Snake-rope analogy in BhAgavat PUrANa

SB 10.14.28: O unlimited Lord, the saintly devotees seek You out within their own bodies by rejecting everything separate from You. Indeed, how can discriminating persons appreciate the real nature of a rope lying before them until they refute the illusion that it is a snake.

MAyA and Unreality of the world

How Jeeva is created by association of Prakriti with Brahman :

"Satyam bhaati chichhaayaa darpaNe prativimbavat, tena chitprativimbena trividhaa bhaati saa punah"

As reflected image is perceived as real in a mirror, in the same way reflection of consciousness in Prakriti is perceived as real. (47-48) - Sarasvati Rahasya Upanishad :

Vikshepa (powr of projection) and aavarana (veiling power) are two powers of MAyA. The power of projection creates from lingadeha i.e. Jeeva's body to the whole universe. The aavaraNa power covers (puts veil upon) the difference between seer and seen and also the difference between Brahman and the world.

When the reflection of consciousness falls on Prakriti as the material cause, then in this world the vyaavhaarik Jeeva comes into being. Because it is imposed on consciousness, it is also perceived as the witness. When the aavarana (veiling power of MAyA) i.e. ignorance (state when reality is covered) is removed, the reality of difference is known and the state of Jeevahood is destroyed.- Sarasvati Rahasya Upanishad :

42-45 The difference between Jeeva and Ishvara (God) is imagined due to MAyA. In reality, the Jeeva made of Consciousness is none but Ishavra itself. The difference between Jeeva and Ishvara is perceived due to differences in names and forms. In reality, there is no difference between the two. If there were real difference between the two then consciousness forms of the both would get violated. The difference seen between one consciousness (Ishvara) and the other (Jeeva) is due to delusion. The non-difference of consciousness is a proven fact by logic and by (experiential) proof. Therefore, by knowing

the non-difference in consciousness man becomes free from delusion and sufferings and is established as non-dual blissful Shiva alone. Rudra Hridayopanishad

Objects do not exist in reality

BP 3.27.4 / KG 2.12 **Indeed, even though objects do not exist really**, the samsAra does not seem to end. Just as one who broads on objects meets with disaster alone, even in the dream. – *Kapila Gita Sara 2.12*

mithyA

[Added on 16-Aug-2022]

Word 'mithyA' is found in nirAlamba Upanishad - 28 and in Yogakhikha Upanishad 4.4 (Chapter 4, sloka 4)

(translated by lahiri mahASaya of kriyA yOga)

mithyA in nirAlamba Upanishad (nirAlambopanishad)
(Commented by Sri Lahiri Mahashaya)

ब्रह्म सत्यं जग**न्मिथ्या** जीवो ब्रहैव नापर (निरालम्बोपनिषद - २८)
*Brahma Satyam Jagan **Mithya** Jivo Brahmaiva Naparah - nirAlambopaniShada - 28 (niralamba Upanishad - 28)*

Only Brahman is truth, this world is **mithyA**. Jiva and Brahman are not different - 28 ((nirAlamba Upanishad - 28)

mithyA in Yogakhikha Upanishad (Yogashikhopanihad)
(Commented by Narayanashrama, a 13th century advaitin)

उपादानं प्रपञ्चस्य ब्रह्मणोऽन्यन्न विद्यते ।
तस्मात्सर्वप्रपञ्चोऽयं ब्रह्मैवास्ति न चेतरत् ॥३॥
व्याप्यव्याप्यकता **मिथ्या** सर्वमात्मेति शासनात् ।
इति ज्ञाते परे तत्त्वे भेदस्यावसरः कुतः ॥४॥

The world is Brahman alone. When the unreality of the world is known, where indeed is difference, bheda?

The immediate cause of the phenomenal world is no other than the Brahman. Hence, this phenomenal world in its entirety is the Brahman alone and nothing else. What is pervaded

and what pervades, is all **mithyA** as, according to the scripture, all is the Atman. Should the highest truth be understood thus, where is the room for any difference (of opinion)

Credits: Thanks to Shri V Subramanian ji of Adbhutam Blog
https://adbhutam.wordpress.com/2022/08/15/advaita-friendly-mithya-term-in-the-puranas/

Note: Shri V Subramanian ji has given many more references of the word 'mithyA' occurring in various purANa-s like skanda purANa, Siva purANa, devi bhAgavata purANa, and Brahmavaivarta purANa too. Please visit his post here

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Two Levels of Truth

For, when there is duality, as it were, one sees another …but when all has become just his Ātman, what could one see and through what? .. - Br. Up. 4.5.15

Full verse is

IV-v-15: Because when there is duality, as it were, then one sees something, one smells something, one tastes something, one speaks something, one hears something, one thinks something, one touches something, one knows something. (But) when to the knower of Brahman everything has become the Self, then what should one see and through what, what should one smell and through what, what should one taste and through what, what should one speak and through what, what should one hear and through what, what should one think and through what, what should one touch and through what, what should one

know and through what ? Through what should one know that owing to which all this is known ? This self is That which has been described as 'Not this, Not this'. It is imperceptible, for It is never perceived; undecaying, for It never decays; unattached, for It is never attached; unfettered – it never feels pain, and never suffers injury. Through what, O Maitreyi, should one know the Knower ? So you have got the instruction, Maitreyi. This much indeed is (the means of) immortality, my dear. Saying this Yajnavalkya left.

Source

Bhagavan in Gita says

अविभक्तं च भूतेषु विभक्तमिव च स्थितम्।
भूतभर्तृ च तज्ज्ञेयं ग्रसिष्णु प्रभविष्णु च।।13.17।।

13.17 And the Knowable, though undivided, appears to be existing as divided in all beings, and It is the sustainer of all beings as also the devourer and originator.

Sure the levels are imaginary, or they do not exist, but for whom? - the one who is rooted in Brahman.

Two Levels of Truth in Yoga School

Two levels of truths is not only accepted by Shruti-s, but it is accepted by dualist schools like Patanjali Yoga Sutra

कृतार्थं प्रति नष्टमऊयनष्ट तदन्यसाधारणत्वात्* ॥ २२ ॥

2.22 Though the object of experience becomes unreal to him who has reached the state of liberation, it remains real to all other beings.

P.Y.S. by Swami Prabhavananda of Ramakrishna Ashram, Page 90

Another translation.

2.22 For the one who has attained the goal [of liberation, the seen] disappears [yet, the seen] is not destroyed because of it's common universality.

krta = done
arthan = purpose, goal
prati = towards, for
naSta = destroyed
api = even though
anaSTam = not destroyed
tad = that
anya = other
sAdhAraNatvAt = because of, due to commonality, universality

Kriya Yoga Sutras of Patanjali and the Siddhas by Marshal Govindan, Page, 86

The author has also connected it with Thirumandiram.

Jiva is accepted at empirical level, but at the same time, one is educated that you wrongly think of yourself as 'Jiva'.

Again, Brahman is not deluded, it APPEARS TO BE deluded.

If we accept that Brahman BECOMEs JIVA then we violate shruti, which says, BG 2.20.

न जायते म्रियते वा कदाचि-
न्नायं भूत्वा भविता वा न भूयः।
अजो नित्यः शाश्वतोऽयं पुराणो
न हन्यते हन्यमाने शरीरे।।2.20।।

2.20 Never is this One born, and never does It die; nor is it that having come to exist, It will again cease to be. This One is birthless, eternal, undecaying, ancient; It is not killed when the body is killed.

If we take BG 2.20 into context, then theory of the world being created would means that once there was no creation and then it is created. The one which has birth, also has death.

Satya

Now the definition of satya and asatya is also not mine. They are given by Bhagavan in BG 2.16

नासतो विद्यते भावो नाभावो विद्यते सतः।
उभयोरपि दृष्टोऽन्तस्त्वनयोस्तत्त्वदर्शिभि ।।2.16।।

2.16 **Of the unreal there is no being**; **the real has no non-existence**. But the nature of both these, indeed, has been realized by the seers of Truth.

So which is true, the world is created and hence jiva-s were once created?

For time being, we can overlook the commentaries by acharya-s.

In plain words,

satya is defined as the one which has NO NON-EXISTENCE is permanent, unchanging, undecaying, etc ...

asatya means that which has NO EXISTENCE AT ANY TIME

Hence we cannot take this world, which constantly change, this body, which constantly change as satya. It voids the definition of satya, according Advaita tenet.

The truth is one, hence the only thing that qualifies to be called as real (satya) is Brahman (Satyam Jnanam anantam Brahma - Tai. Up. 2.1.1)

At no cost we can afford to violate the definitions of real and unreal.

Hence we have to tag this experience as something different than the two. Adi Shankara called this mithyA, which in simple words can mean - Temporary.

Gita herself says that same about the world in BG 8.15

The only thing is we take everything that is changing, moving, etc as mithyA, hence even subtle worlds like heaven, etc also fall under this category.

Further Katha Up. Says

1-II-10. I know that the treasure is impermanent, for that which is **constant cannot be reached by things which are not constant.**

vyavahArIka satya and pArmArthika satya in viShNu purANa

[Added on 25-Jun-2022]

अहं ममेत्यविद्येयं व्यवहारस्तथानयोः ।

परमार्थस्त्वसंलाप्यो गोचरो वचसां न सः ॥ ६,७.१०० ॥ -

It is vyavahArIka state to say 'I am mine', due to avidyA. The 'pAramArthika' state is beyond words; cannot be articulated.

Source: https://adbhutam.wordpress.com/2022/04/21/paramarthika-vyavaharika/

Vishnu Purana, Part 6, Chapter 7

Gita Press: Page 459, Sanskrit-Hindi translation.

Jivan Mukta and Videha Mukta in Tejo Bindu Upanishad

Chapter 4 of Tejo Bindu Upanishad is dedicated to Jivan mukta and Videha mukta

Jivan Mukta

Kumara asked the great Lord: "Please explain to me the nature of Jivanmukti (embodied salvation) and Videhamukti (disembodied salvation)." To which the great Shiva replied:

1. "I am Chidatma. I am Para-Atma. I am the Nirguna, greater than the great. One who will simply stay in Atman is called a Jivanmukta.

2. He who realises: 'I am beyond the three bodies, I am the pure consciousness and I am Brahman', is said to be a Jivanmukta.

3. He is said to be a Jivanmukta, who realises: 'I am of the nature of the blissful and of the supreme bliss, and I have neither body nor any other thing except the certitude 'I am Brahman' only.

4-6. He is said to be a Jivanmukta who has not at all got the 'I' in myself, but who stays in Chinmatra (absolute consciousness) alone, whose interior is consciousness alone, who is only of the nature of Chinmatra, whose Atman is of the nature of the all-full, who has Atman left over in all, who is devoted to bliss, who is undifferentiated, who is all-full of the nature of consciousness, whose Atman is of the nature of pure consciousness, who has given up all affinities (for objects), who has unconditioned bliss, whose Atman is tranquil, who has got no other thought (than Itself) and who is devoid of the thought of the existence of anything.

7-11(a). He is said to be a Jivanmukta who realises: 'I have no Chitta, no Buddhi, no Ahamkara, no sense, no body at any time, no Pranas, no Maya, no passion and no anger, I am the great, I have nothing of these objects or of the world and I have no sin, no characteristics, no eye, no Manas, no ear, no nose, no tongue, no hand, no waking, no dreaming, or causal state in the least or the fourth state.'

11(b)-30(a). He is said to be a Jivanmukta, who realises: 'All this is not mind, I have no time, no space, no object, no thought, no Snana (bathing), no Sandhyas(junction-period ceremonies), no deity, no place, no sacred places, no worship, no spiritual wisdom, no seat, no relative, no birth, no speech, no wealth, no virtue, no vice, no duty, no auspiciousness, no Jiva, not even the three worlds, no salvation, no duality, no Vedas, no mandatory rules, no proximity, no distance, no knowledge, no secrecy, no Guru, no disciple, no diminution, no excess, no Brahma, no Vishnu, no Rudra, no moon, no earth, no water, no Vayu, no Akasa, no Agni, no clan, no Lakshya (object aimed at), no mundane existence, no meditator, no object of meditation, no Mans, no cold, no heat, no thirst, no hunger, no friend, no foe, no illusion, no victory, no past, present, or future, no quarters, nothing to be said or heard in the least, nothing to be gone to (or attained), nothing to be contemplated, enjoyed or remembered, no enjoyment, no desire, no Yoga, no absorption, no garrulity, no quietude, no bondage, no love, no joy, no instant joy, no hugeness, no smallness, neither length nor shortness, neither increase nor decrease, neither Adhyaropa (illusory attribution) nor Apavada (withdrawal of that conception) , no oneness, no manyness, no blindness, no dullness, no skill, no flesh, no blood, no lymph, no skin, no

marrow, no bone, no skin, none of the seven Dhatus, no whiteness, no redness, no blueness, no heat, no gain, neither importance nor non-importance, no delusion, no perseverance, no mystery, no race, nothing to be abandoned or received, nothing to be laughed at, no policy, no religious vow, no fault, no bewailments, no happiness, neither knower nor knowledge nor the knowable, no Self, nothing belonging to you or to me, neither you nor I, and neither old age nor youth nor manhood; but I am certainly Brahman. 'I am certainly Brahman. I am Chit, I am Chit'.

30(b)-31. He is said to be a Jivanmukta who cognises: 'I am Brahman alone, I am Chit alone, I am the supreme'. No doubt need be entertained about this; 'I am Hamsa itself, I remain of my own will, I can see myself through myself, I reign happy in the kingdom of Atman and enjoy in myself the bliss of my own Atman'.

32. He is a Jivanmukta who is himself, the foremost and the one undaunted person who is himself the lord and rests in his own Self.

Videha Mukta

33. He is a Videhamukta who has become Brahman, whose Atman has attained quiescence, who is of the nature of Brahmic bliss, who is happy, who is of a pure nature and who is a great Mouni (observer of silence).

34-37. He is a Videhamukta who remains in Chinmatra alone without (even) thinking thus: 'I am all Atman, the Atman that is equal (or the same) in all, the pure, without one, the non-dual, the all, the self only, the birthless and the deathless – I am myself the undecaying Atman that is the object aimed at, the sporting, the silent, the blissful, the beloved and the bondless salvation – I am Brahman alone – I am Chit alone'.

38. He is a Videhamukta who having abandoned the thought: 'I alone am the Brahman' is filled with bliss.

39-47(a). He is a Videhamukta who having given up the certainty of the existence or non-existence of all objects is pure Chidananda (the consciousness-bliss), who having abandoned (the thought): 'I am Brahman' (or) 'I am not Brahman' does not mingle his Atman with anything, anywhere or at any time, who is ever silent with the silence of Satya, who does nothing, who has gone beyond Gunas, whose Atman has become the All, the great and the purifier of the elements, who does not cognise the change of time, matter, place, himself or other differences, who does not see (the difference of) 'I', 'thou', 'this', or 'that', who being of the nature of time is yet without it, whose Atman is void, subtle and universal, but yet without (them), whose Atman is divine and yet without Devas, whose Atman is measurable and yet without measure, whose Atman is without inertness and within every one, whose Atman is devoid of any Sankalpa, who thinks always: 'I am Chinmatra, I am simply Paramatman, I am only of the nature of spiritual wisdom, I am only of the nature of Sat, I am afraid of nothing in this world', and who is without the

conception of Devas, Vedas and sciences, 'All this is consciousness, etc.,' and regards all as void.

47(b)-48. He is a Videhamukta who has realised himself to be Chaitanya alone, who is remaining at ease in the pleasure-garden of his own Atman, whose Atman is of an illimitable nature, who is without conception of the small and the great and who is the fourth of the fourth state and the supreme bliss.

49-53(a). He is a Videhamukta whose Atman is nameless and formless, who is the great spiritual wisdom of the nature of bliss and of the nature of the state beyond Turya, who is neither auspicious nor inauspicious, who has Yoga as his Atman, whose Atman is associated with Yoga, who is free from bondage or freedom, without Guna or non-Guna, without space, time, etc., without the witnessable and the witness, without the small or the great and without the cognition of the universe or even the cognition of the nature of Brahman, but who finds his spiritual effulgence in his own nature, who finds bliss in himself, whose bliss is beyond the scope of words and mind and whose thought is beyond the beyond.

53(b)-54. He is said to be a Videhamukta who has gone beyond (or mastered quite) the modifications of Chitta, who illumines such modifications and whose Atman is without any modifications at all. In that case, he is neither embodied nor disembodied. If such a thought is entertained (even), for a moment, then he is surrounded (in thought) by all.

55-62. He is a Videhamukta whose external Atman invisible to others is the supreme bliss aiming at the highest Vedanta, who drinks of the juice of the nectar of Brahman, who has the nectar of Brahman as medicine, who is devoted to the juice of the nectar of Brahman, who is immersed in that juice, who has the beneficent worship of the Brahmic bliss, who is not satiated with the juice of the nectar of Brahman, who realises Brahmic bliss, who cognises the Shiva bliss in Brahmic bliss, who has the effulgence of the essence of Brahmic bliss, who has become one with it, who lives in the household of Brahmic bliss, has mounted the car of Brahmic bliss, who has an imponderable Chit being one with it, who is supporting (all), being full of it, who associates with me having it, who stays in Atman having that bliss and who thinks: 'All this is of the nature of Atman, there is nothing else beside Atman, all is Atman, I am Atman, the great Atman, the supreme Atman and Atman of the form of bliss'.

63-68(a). He who thinks: 'My nature is full, I am the great Atman, I am the all-contented and the permanent Atman. I am the Atman pervading the heart of all, which is not stained by anything, but which has no Atman; I am the Atman whose nature is changeless, I am the quiescent Atman; and I am the many Atman'. He who does not think this is Jivatma and that is Paramatma, whose Atman is of the nature of the emancipated and the non-emancipated, but without emancipation or bondage, whose Atman is of the nature of the dual and the non-dual one, but without duality and non-duality; whose Atman is of the nature of the All and the non-All, but without them; whose Atman is of the nature of the happiness arising from objects obtained and enjoyed, but without it; and who is devoid of any Sankalpa – such a man is a Videhamukta.

68(b)-79. He whose Atman is partless, stainless, enlightened, Purusha, without bliss, etc., of the nature of the nectar, of the nature of the three periods of time, but without them; whose Atman is entire and non-measurable, being subject to proof though without proof; whose Atman is the eternal and the witness, but without eternality and witness; whose Atman is of the nature of the secondless, who is the self-shining one without a second, whose Atman cannot be measured by Vidya and Avidya but without them; whose Atman is without conditionedness or unconditionedness, who is without this or the higher worlds, whose Atman is without the six things beginning with Sama, who is without the qualifications of the aspirant after salvation, whose Atman is without gross, subtle, causal and the fourth bodies and without the Anna, Prana, Manas and Vijnana sheaths; whose Atman is of the nature of Ananda (bliss) sheath, but without five sheaths; whose Atman is of the nature of Nirvikalpa, is devoid of Sankalpa, without the characteristics of the visible or the audible and of the nature of void, owing to unceasing Samadhi, who is without beginning, middle, or end; whose Atman is devoid of the word Prajnana, who is without the idea 'I am Brahman', whose Atman is devoid (of the thought) of 'thou art', who is without the thought 'this is Atman', whose Atman is devoid of that which is described by Om, who is above the reach of any speech or the three states and is the indestructible and the Chidatma, whose Atman is not the one which can be known by Atman and whose Atman has neither light nor darkness. Such a personage is a Videhamukta.

80-81. Look only upon Atman; know It as your own. Enjoy your Atman yourself and stay in peace. O six-faced one, be content in your own Atman, be wandering in your own Atman and be enjoying your own Atman. Then you will attain Videhamukti".

Thus ends the fourth chapter.

adhyAropa apavAda in tejo bindu upanishad

11(b)-30(a). He is said to be a Jivanmukta, who realises: 'All this is not mind, I have no time, no space, no object, no thought, no Snana (bathing), no Sandhyas(junction-period ceremonies), no deity, no place, no sacred places, no worship, no spiritual wisdom, no seat, no relative, no birth, no speech, no wealth, no virtue, no vice, no duty, no auspiciousness, no Jiva, not even the three worlds, no salvation, no duality, no Vedas, no mandatory rules, no proximity, no distance, no knowledge, no secrecy, no Guru, no disciple, no diminution, no excess, no Brahma, no Vishnu, no Rudra, no moon, no earth, no water, no Vayu, no Akasa, no Agni, no clan, no Lakshya (object aimed at), no mundane existence, no meditator, no object of meditation, no Mans, no cold, no heat, no thirst, no hunger, no friend, no foe, no illusion, no victory, no past, present, or future, no quarters, nothing to be said or heard in the least, nothing to be gone to (or attained), nothing to be contemplated, enjoyed or remembered, no enjoyment, no desire, no Yoga, no absorption, no garrulity, no quietude, no bondage, no love, no joy, no instant joy, no hugeness, no smallness, neither length nor shortness, neither increase nor decrease, **neither Adhyaropa (illusory attribution) nor Apavada (withdrawal of that conception)** , no oneness, no manyness, no blindness, no dullness, no skill, no flesh, no blood, no lymph, no skin, no marrow, no bone, no skin, none of the seven Dhatus, no whiteness, no redness,

no blueness, no heat, no gain, neither importance nor non-importance, no delusion, no perseverance, no mystery, no race, nothing to be abandoned or received, nothing to be laughed at, no policy, no religious vow, no fault, no bewailments, no happiness, neither knower nor knowledge nor the knowable, no Self, nothing belonging to you or to me, neither you nor I, and neither old age nor youth nor manhood; but I am certainly Brahman. 'I am certainly Brahman. I am Chit, I am Chit'.

Jiva is destroyed

Jiva is renounced

BP 3.25.39-40 / KG 1.23-24: **I take such devotees across death who, having renounced** all others, this world, the other world, **the jiva-hood** that goes from this world to the other, the body, and all that relates to it like prosperity, animals, and houses, worship Me alone of universal form with single pointed devotion - *Kapila Gita Sara 1.23-24*

Jiva is destroyed - Nirvikalp Samadhi

BP 3.33.26 / KG 3.13: **Due to the elimination of jIva-hood, and the mind firmly abiding in th Reality, the Lord, who is the support of all jIva-s, her afflictions were destroyed and she attained total peace.** *Kapila Gita Sara 3.13*

BP 3.33.27 / KG 3.14: **As her mind remained absorbed in the Truth, she transcended the delusion of the qualities of prakriti and, at that time, did not even remember her body like the one who awakes (does not remember) objects seen in the dream.** – *Kapila Gita Sara 2.14*

Concepts on puruSa

PuruSa was attribuless before creation

BP 3.26.3 / KG 2.3: **Before creation, the PuruSa was the beginningless Self, attributeless, beyond prakriti, the very subject and Self-shining, and even now it alone pervades the world.** – *Kapila Gita Sara 2.3*

Swami Tejomayananda further explains the meaning of AtmA (Self) from viShNu purANa as -

AtmA is that which pervades (the universe), takes back (the universe at the time of dissolution), enjoys (as the illuminator or experiencer of) objects here (in the world), and has eternal existence.

PuruSa manifested as Prakriti

BP 3.26.4 / KG 2.4: **The same infinite Lord, by chance alone, in sport, became manifested as the subtle prakriti with qualities.** – *Kapila Gita Sara 2.4*

BP 3.26.5 / KG 2.5: Prakriti with its qualities creates a variety of being like itself. **The Lord/Self having seen the creation got (as it were) completely deluded through the veiling of knowledge.** – *Kapila Gita Sara 2.5*

PuruSa does not get affected by prakriti

BP 3.27.1 / KG 2.9: The puruSa, even though dwelling in prakriti, does not get affected by the qualities of prakriti, as he is immutable, non-doer, and attributeless like the sun in water. – *Kapila Gita Sara 2.9*

nirvikalp samAdhi in bhAgavat purANa

How can there be freedom in the presence of qualities of Prakriti?

DevAhuti, has doubts as how can one get rid of prakriti

BP 3.27.17 / KG 2.14: **O Lord! What if the prakriti does not leave the puruSa due to mutual interdependence and eternal coexistence?** – *Kapila Gita Sara 2.14*

DevahUti gives an example to support her point.

BP 3.27.18 / KG 2.15: Just as smell cannot exist without earth, sapidity without water, in the same way there is mutual dependence and coexistence of the mind (prakriti) and the Supreme (puruSa) – *Kapila Gita Sara 2.15*

BP 3.27.19 / KG 2.16: Therefore, **how can there be freedom in the presence of the qualities of prakriti? (For prakriti) causes the bondage in action to the puruSa who is a non-doer.** – *Kapila Gita Sara 2.16*

Finally, devahUti concludes

BP 3.27.20 / KG: 2.17: Sometimes, by the discrimination of truth, the terrible fear (on bondage) is removed. But since it's cause is not removed, it may come back again. – *Kapila Gita Sara 2.17*

Reply

Kapila Muni, the Lord replies,

BP 3.27.21-23 / KG 2.18-20: **The bondage of puruSa by prakriti is burnt up by spiritual practices performed day and night by prakriti (body-mind) itself,** like the fuel by the fire in the cup of the araNi. The practices are causeless ("choiceless) performance of one's duties, purity of mind, intense devotion to Me, nourished by constant listening, knowledge with clear vision of Truth, strong dispassion, intense meditation accompanied by austerity, and absorption of the mind. – *Kapila Gita Sara 2.18-20*

jIva does not get deluded when -

BP 3.27.24 / KG 2.21: **That prakriti which has been completely enjoyed, then discarded, whose evil effects are seen constantly, can cause no harm to one who abides in the glory of one's own Self.** – *Kapila Gita Sara 2.21*

The above statement is explained further with the help of example.

BP 3.27.25 / KG: 2.22: Just as a dream causes a lot of sorrow to one who has not awaken, but the same does not delude one who has woken up. – *Kapila Gita Sara 2.22*

A person when asleep dreams and takes a role where he enjoys, suffers but on awakening, he realizes that everything was illusion and not a reality. Further bhagavAn says,

BP 3.27.26 / KG 2.23: **In the same way, prakriti never harms him who knows the Truth and who revels in the Self, as his mind is always united with Me.** – *Kapila Gita Sara 2.23*

Earlier, it was said that puruSa was formless and attributeless (without qualities) prior to creation. Our journey too is to go back to this state where there is no one else other than Self.

PARAMAGATI AND YOGA IN KATHA UPANISHAD 2.3.10-11

[Added on 13-Aug-2022]

paramagati is explained in kaTha Upanishad 2.3.10. This parama gati is also the yoga or the final state attained by a yogI. parama gati is not ascending to any loka like vaikuNTha or brahmaloka, it is the merging in the Self. For details, please study 2.3.6-11. Study of futher slokas is also beneficial. Entire valli 3 of adhyAya 2 is important to understand it.

kaTha Upanishad 2.3.10

यदा पञ्चावतिष्ठन्ते ज्ञानानि मनसा सह ।

बुद्धिश्च न विचेष्टते तामाहुः परमां गतिम् ॥ १० ॥

When five indriyas (senses of perception) along with mind merges [in Atman] and intellect too ceases to be active, that state is known as parama gati (highest state).

kaTha Upanishad 2.3.11

तां योगमिति मन्यन्ते स्थिरामिन्द्रियधारणाम् ।

अप्रमत्तस्तदा भवति योगो हि प्रभवाप्ययौ ॥ ११ ॥

This firm stillness of indriyas (senses of perception) i.e. firm holding back of senses in mind, is known as Yoga. In this state a person becomes aware or watchful i.e. becomes witness, because yoga is the origin (utpatti) and termination (laya) of all objects.

Note: in these two slokas, indriyas gets pulled back in their source which is mind. Mind gets power from Atman and become active. Mind perceives the world and tries to find happiness and peace through five senses i.e. indriyas and so becomes extrovert. When 5 senses of perception are pulled back in their source mind, then mind cannot perceive the world. It turns back to its source which is Atman and gets merged in it. This state of merging mind in Atman is known as Yoga, it is Nirvikalpa Samadhi. It is said that Buddhi i.e. intellect is subtler than mind. So with the help of decisive intellect i.e. making firm decision to ignore outer and also mental world, one directs mind to pull the senses back within itself. Then the mind does not keep hunting for external objects, not does it try to keep thinking. It becomes calm and turns back to it's source Atman. As soon as mind merges in Atman, intellect too merges in Atman as it's job is done , the job of giving direction to the mind and controlling it.

Random Quotes and Thoughts

A Collection of Interesting Quotes for personal references and connecting shastras. This page also contains personal notes on various advaita topic which are not connected to each other.

Quotes from SAstra-s

Quotes from SAstra-s.

Amrit Bindu Upanishad

19. Of cows which are of diverse colours the milk is of the same colour. (the intelligent one) regards Jnana as the milk, and the many-branched Vedas as the cows.

20. Like the butter hidden in milk, the Pure Consciousness resides in every being. That ought to be constantly churned out by the churning rod of the mind.

source

Tejo Bindu Upanishad

22. It is 'That' which is (really) called silence and which is naturally understood (as such). There is silence in children, but with words (latent); whereas the knowers of Brahman have it (silence) but without words.

24-25. The illusion of Brahma and all other beings takes place within one twinkling (of His eye). That should be known as Asana (posture), in which one has with ease and without fatigue (uninterrupted) meditation of Brahman; that is described by the word Kala (time), that is endless bliss and that is secondless. Everything else is the destroyer of happiness.

AdhyAtma Upanishad

7. Dissolve the self in the supreme Self as the pot-space is dissolved in infinite space; then, as the Infinite be silent for ever, O sage !

15. Just as a pulled-up water-reed stays not still, even for a moment, so does Maya (ceaselessly) envelop even a wise man if he averts his face (from the Truth).

19. All things from Brahma down to clumps of grass are nothing but unreal adjuncts. Distinct from the, see one's Self existing as the immutable plenum. (Refer Vivek Chudamani)

27. Upon realizing the Self that is impartite bliss as one's own essence (there follows) the savoring of the timeless bliss that is the Self, both externally and internally.

28. Of detachment the fruit is knowledge: of knowledge the fruit is withdrawal. Experience of Self as bliss leads to peace; again, peace is the fruit of withdrawal.

Chandogya Upanishad

8.1.6 One’s present status of material pleasure, the result of one’s previous work, will eventually be vanquished by time. Similarly, although by executing pious activities one will be elevated to a higher status in the next life, that future situation will also be vanquished.

Para Brahma Upanishad explains inner meaning of sacred thread Upnayana

Brahmin wearing sacred Thread - Internal and External

3. Then to this realized person reality (i.e. true wisdom) constitutes the inner tuft and sacred thread. To the Brahmana desirous of liberation is (allowed) the state of the inward tuft and sacred thread. The wearing of externally visible tuft and sacred thread (is necessary) for the householders engaged in rituals. The characteristic of the inward sacred thread is not clearly visible like external thread; it is the union with reality inwardly.

Yoga Chudamani Upanishad explains OM / AUM and Brahman

(Part of the SamaVeda)

Para Brahman is Om, is that which exists, which is clean, which is full of wisdom, which does not have any draw backs, which is without stains, which cannot be described, which does not have beginning or end, which is one and only one, which is thuriya, which exists in things of past, present and future and which will never get divided at any time. From that Para Brahman emerges Para Shakthi (the female aspect). That is the soul which is self resplendent. From that soul arose the ether. From ether arose wind. From wind arose fire. From fire arose water and from water arose the earth. These five elements are ruled by the five Godheads viz. Sadasiva, Easwara, Rudra, Vishnu and Brahma. Among them Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra would do the job of creation, upkeep and destruction. Brahma is Rajasic, Vishnu Sathvic and Rudra Thamasic. They are thus with three different properties. 72.1

Among devas Brahma arose first. Among those who arose first, Brahma became the creator, Vishnu the one who upkeeps and Lord Rudra, the destroyer. Among them from Brahma arose worlds, devas, men and those in between them. From him arose those things which do not move. In case of men, the body is the unified form of Pancha Boothas (five elements). The organs of wisdom, (jnanendriyas), the organs of action (karmendriyas), those activities related to wisdom, the five body airs (prana, apana etc) are taught by the macro portion of mind, intellect, decision making power and the feeling of self and are called macro body (Sthoola sareeram). The organs of wisdom, the organs of action, things related to wisdom, the five body airs and the micro aspect of mind and intellect are called Linga sareera. The body has three types of properties. Thus all people have three bodies. There are four states of the body viz wakeful state, dream, sleep and Thuriya (exalted spiritual state). Those purushas who reside in our body and control these states are Viswa, Thaijasa, Pragna and Atma. Viswa will always have macro experiences. Different from that is Thaijasa who has micro experiences. Pragna has pleasant experiences. Athma is a witness to all these. 72

The Atma which is of the form of "Om", will be in all beings and at the time of passion, downward looking. At all other times it would be pretty and downward face. 73

In the three letters Aa, Uu and Ma, three Vedas, three worlds, three characteristics, three letters and three sounds shine. Thus Pranava shines. When you are awake, the letter Aa exists in the eyes of all beings, when you are dreaming the letter Uu exists in the neck of all beings and the letter Ma exists in the heart of all beings when they are asleep. 74

The letter Aa exists in the egg state as Viswa and Pinda state as Virat Purusha. The Letter Uu exists as Thaijasa and Hiranya Garbha in the micro state. The letter Ma exists as the causal state and as Pragna. The letter Aa has Rajasa qualities is red and its form is that of Lord Brahma. The letter Uu has Sathvika qualities and its form is that of white Vishnu. The letter Ma has Thamasic qualities and its form is that of black Rudra. Brahma took birth from Pranava. Vishnu also came out of it. Rudra also came out of it. Pranava is the Para Brahma (ultimate god). Brahma merges with the letter Aa. Vishnu merges with letter Uu and Rudra merges with the letter Ma. In people with wisdom, Pranava would be upward looking and among ignorant people Pranava would be looking downward. 75-78

Pranava exists like this. The one who knows this knows the Vedas. In the anahatha sound form, it grows upwards in case of wise people. 79

The sound Pranava is continuous like the flow of oil, and like the long sound of the bell. Its peak is Brahman. 80

That peak would be lit so brilliantly, that it cannot be described by words. The great savants find it out using their sharp intellect. The one who knows that, is considered as one who knows Vedas. 81

The "Hamsa (swan) mantra", shines in the middle of the two eyes. The letter Sa is known as Kechari which means "that which travels in the sky". It has been decided that it is the word "Twam (you)" in the famous Vedic saying, "Tat Tvam Asi (You are That)". 82

It has been decided that the letter "Ha" which is the Lord of all universe is the word "Tat (that)" in the above Vedic saying. We have to meditate that the letter "Sa" as the soul traveling between birth and death and the letter "Ha" as the stable God. 83

The living being is tied up by his organs but Paramatma is not so tied. The living being is egoistic and the soul is not tied by egoism and is independent. 84

The ethereal light which is "om" is that Athma in whose aspects stand the three worlds Bhu, Bhuva and Suva and also the place where three gods moon, Sun and fire reside. 85

The ethereal light which is "Om", is that Atma in whose aspects stand "work" which is the power of Brahma,"desire" which is the power of Rudra and "wisdom" which is the power of Vishnu. 86

Because Om is the ethereal light, it has to be pronounced by words, practiced by the body and meditated upon by the mind. 87

The one who goes on chanting Pranava whether he is clean or unclean will not be attached to the sins he does, similar to the lotus leaf which never gets wet. 88

[Slokas 89-102 are not available.]

Twelve repetitions of "Om" which is called is a pooraka followed by sixteen repetitions of "Om" which is called is the Kumbhaka and then ten repetitions of "Om" which is called Rechaka, is called Pranayama. 103

source

Random thoughts

Personal notes.

Another way to understand Adi Shankara

Sri Ramana Maharshi - Talk 315

One of the attendants asked: Sri Bhagavan has said:'Reality and myth are both the same'. How it is so?

Maharshi: The tantrikas and others of the kind condemn Sri Shankara's philosophy as maya vada without understanding him aright.

What does he say? He says.

1. Brahman is real.

2. The universe is a myth.

3. Brahman is the universe.

He does not stop at the second statement but continues to supplement it with the third. What does it signify? The universe is conceived to be apart from Brahman and that perception is wrong. The antagonists point to his illustration of rajju sarpa (rope snake). This is unconditioned superimposition. After the truth of the rope is known, the illussion of snake is removed once for all.

But they should take the unconditioned superimposition also into consideration, e.g. marumarichika or mrigatrishna(Water of mirage).

The mirage does not disappear even after knowing to be a mirage. The vision is there but the man does not run to it for water. Sri Shankara must be understood in the light of both the illustrations. The world is a myth. Even after knowing it, it continues to appear. It must be known to be Brahman and not apart.

If the world appears, yet to whom does it appear, he asks. What is your reply? You must say the self. If not, will the world appear in the absence of the congnising self? Therefore the self is the reality. That is his conclusion. The phenomena are real as the self and are myths apart from the self.

Now, what do the tantriks etc. say? They say that the phenomena are real because they are part of the reality in which they appear.

Are not these two statements the same? That is what i meant by reality and falsehood being one and the same.

The antagonists continue: With the conditioned as well as the unconditioned illusions considered, the phenomenon of wate in mirage is purely illusory because that water cannot be used for any purpose. Whereas the phenomenon of the world is different, for it is purposeful. How then does the latter stand on a par with the former?

A phenomenon cannot be a reality simply because it serves a purpose or purposes. Take a dream for example. The dream creations are purposesful: They serve the dream-purpose. The dream water quenches dream thirst. The dream creation is however contradicted in the other two states. What is not continuous cannot be real. If real, the thing must ever be real and not real for a short time and unreal at other times.

So it is with magical creations. They appear real and are yet illusory.

Similarly the universe cannot be real of itself-that is to say, apart from the underlying reality.....

This conversation proves the saying 'Only a jnani can understand another jnani.'

http://groups.yahoo.com/group/advaitin/message/31951

Notes on karma

As I understand, what makes difference is the initiative to start a new work and not the work itself.

Initiative means to think of something, to create or conceive a new idea --> mind becomes active.

Since it is you who is creating, it means the karma done is sakAma.

If things are done spontaneously without planning, then it is ok, but creative thinking like a web designer does nor an engineer designing a new mechanical part for a machine, etc all require our imagination and creativity.

Hence this type of karma becomes kAmya karma. Skilful in action would mean

1. do karma with SAxI bhAva
2. do karma for ISvara.

I am more tilted towards SAxi bhAva. Here there is no creativity. You just do the work. Sri vidyAraNya svAmI in PanchadaSI (dhyAnadIpa prakaraNa) and Sri Ramakrishna both give an example of a women who does all the work in house sincerely, but her mind is always longing for her lover.

In case of surrendering work to ISvara, some say think that all thoughts like creativity also comes from ISvara. The problem begins (from advaita POV).

karma is jaDa, what makes one attached to the fruits is the ichchA, ASA, hetu, etc. When one is in SAxI bhAva, then one is witness. an observer cannot act. Both cannot be done at a time. Advaita begins with renunciation of actions, atleast mental. Hence creating new work is not advised. It is like hitting your axe on your own leg.

For practical application, as human beings, we must try to apply as much as possible, until we are able to remain calm. Mind does not hanker for any sense object or for any person. Mind is peaceful. With constant practice, one can achieve success. A ball when dropped from a height does not become motionless, but bounces back upwards. But each time the bounce reduces until ball becomes still.

Skilful is not to be taken in literal sense that we refer to an art of doing a particular work.

The goal is life decides our direction and also the type and direction of sadhana. Moksha is the first thing that is needed. Later this bhAva gets strong.

niSkAma karma and akarma.

niSkama karma means that you are doing karma without any fruits or with SAkxI bhAva. Routine karmas like eating, sleeping, bath, etc do not hinder in meditation. What matters is our own initiation, bonds with objects and persons, which is called as jIva sruShTi. ISvara sruShTi is pruthvI, tArA, naxatra, graha, parvata, nadI (river), etc. These things and acts necessary for survival of body do not disturb. Hence we should not compare them with karma that we do to fulfill our desire like earning more and more money and keep satisfying demands, desires, etc. Earning for survival is ok and should not be taken as hindrance. What matters is our planning and if things do not work according to our plan, then we get upset and analysis starts. So repetition of any karma (due to rAga) and criticizing and staying away, failure analysis (due to dveSa) gives rise to kAma, krodha, moha, etc. In all this our ego swells like balloon. It is intention or motive behind any karma that is important and not the karma itself, as karma is (comparatively) jaDa (w.r.t mind).

In short anything that strengthens jIva bhAva is to be avoided as much as possible. ISvara srushTi helps us. So we move from sakAma karma to niSkAma karma.

But still there is an observer. In akarma sthiti, you clearly know that 'I am not the doer AND ISvara is the doer'. In niSkAma karma there is still avaraNa of aGYAna. akarma does not generate any fruits.

Hence a GYAnI's actions are inactions (akarma), while aGYAnI, who's mind is not calm, keeps thinking and hence his maun is just vAcika maun, inside him, there is too much turbulence, while GYAnI's mind even while working (acting) is calm. GYAnI acts on intuitions or say, someone is controlling his acts.

It is the mental calmness that is important. vairAGYa means absence of bhOgya padArtha (in mind). maun is vacika then mAnasika and later on it is said that the true maun is the maun of vAsanA-s. When there is no desire, then there is actual maun, in Atma-sthiti.

So in meditation, while meditating on OM, initially one may chant verbally in low tone, but later it shifts to mental chanting. Here chanting is done in mind.

Where is mind?

Mind (and hence thoughts) are connected to sahasrahAra chakra, but emotions are connected to anAhata. So when one is hurt, we feel hurt in chest and not head, while too many thoughts move with great speed, it influences head.

From another angle, a way to find mind is to be aware from where thoughts are coming, exactly in that place you becomes aware and starts chanting OM and thoughts fade away.

From effort to effortless

But this is just initial state. Here there is an effort to chant. Later on, OM continues by itself, and then one becomes observer. Now, one can be aware of beginning, termination and intonation, pitch, spandan (gap between two OMs), so as to make meditation continuous (AjyadhArayA says Sri Ramana Maharshi, another word is saral chintanam)

Now, chanting shifts from mind to heart, not physical heart, but source. Some also experience it in center of chest (anAhata chakra), but it is not necessary to have this experience.

So, from verbal to mental to auto chanting (ajapA japa) is the path.

Since, you, as an observer, do not make efforts, hence there is no fatigue and bordom, there is no stress and hence no saturation point. AS this period of effortless chanting increases, both quantity and quality of meditation increases.

Here too, by being aware of udbhava sthAna of OM (tUrIyA), OM will automatically rest in it's source. One moves beyond space and time. Time is also a concept of mind. Only you are present.

So, in meditation, we move from effort to effortless. With such practice, meditation continuous even when one is working in day time, fully concentrating in work allotted to

s/he and his/her action becomes inaction. I am not able ot explain it properly, but it happens. Life is a happening, and one begins to forget (vismriti / vismruti) of day-2-day life and does not remember what he had done yesterday. He now finds it hard to think, as if I will have to make efforts to think. Until one is in this phase, life just flows, life is a happening. With repeated practice, and with the habit of being aware (acquired in meditation by the grace of gurU and ISvara), one can become sAxI.

Our journey from doer to sAxI to Atma sthiti is sakAma --> niSkAma --> akarma --> nirvikalp samAdhi --> moxa (sva-svarUpa sthiti becomes sahaj sthiti ==> jIvanamukti).

Accept all, accept none

It is said that to embrace all or to have this world as family (vAsudeva kutumba), one has to renounce our own family (from mind).

Until we are attached to our family, there will be bias and hence we will give priority to our family members, close relatives, friends and loved ones.

If we become neutral and do not get attached to our relatives, then

we will accept all 'as it is ' and

accept none

accept all 'as it is' with positive and negative qualities, so that neutralizes dveSa
accept none (this neutralizes rAga)

Do not value things or person too much to make you mOhAnda (blinded by attachment) that you cannot see the truth.

100 % application of all these words is not there, but we can sure try to apply them as much as possible.

what we talk of univesal or say unconditional love comes when we are not attached with any one, then our heart is purified and love for God blossoms in us. If this happens then we are on a spiritual journey.

1. accept all 'as it is' with positive and negative qualities, so that neutralizes dveSa
2. accept none (this neutralizes rAga)

Both are said from vyavahArika plane and increase aprigraha (dispassion)

One can apply them in day-2-day life.

Suppose anyone has said or done something that hurts you. You start to think negative of s/he. But if you accept s/he's nature 'as it is' meaning s/he is like this only, s/he is not going to change and I cannot change anyone, God accepts s/he with her negative and positive qualities, so why I shouldn't accept s/he?

So accept s/he. To add to it, you can forgive and forget. But this does not mean that you will have to maintain contact or relation with him/her. Just avoid being negative and turn your face towards God. Do not take in mind whatever s/he does. BUT, at the same time, Since we are living in samsAra (society), hence we will have to take precautionary steps like avoid s/he, keep distance from such people. If they are tricking you, be alert and prepared. Let them take first step, then we can counter. But we still know that scorpion always bites and biting is his nature, so do not get surprised or get angry, in short do not loose your mental balance either by being negative or upset or being too much attracted (in opposite case, if you have rAga).

This is what I mean accept 'as it is'. Ofcourse you can talk from sarvAtma bhAva. I am more interested in applying it in my daily life and this is the way I apply it.

2. Accept none.

This directly means vairAGYA. Even your body is not your own. Like I gave e.g. of a lady with an affair will do all work honestly but her mind will always be longing for her lover.

Two things

1. No interest in work - no attachment, but work gets done
2. Longing for lover (ISvara)

So 'accepting as it is' and accepting 'one' would mean to accept each one with +ve and -ve qualities and do not think about their behaviour, do not take their behaviour on your mind. Be indifferent. This does not mean heart of stone. or being insensitive. Our heart and hence sentiments are surrendered and dedicated to ISvara, yes *first* ISvara has to be there, so that you can renounce world (for him).

accepting none means non-accachment

So,

accept all - no dveSa

accept none - no rAga

both from vyavahAraika plane, in a way that one can apply in practical life.

Moksha has to be THE goal.

When there is no expectation from others, then you do not need to accept anyone in a sense of attachment. The association with others is issue based, my heart longs only for ISvara.

But in real life, we are attached to something or someone. Both environment (spiritual & geographical) and people influence us. So it is but natural to have rAga and dveSa. Hence the first step is not to let anything inside us. Accepting people's *all* qualities means to neutralize mind. Later statement accepting one' is more subtle, and as you have pointed out former is subset of later. If later (accepting none), which implies being neutral (not negative) is developed within, then first not needed.

So, accepting all --> making extrovert mind introvert by making it calm. accepting none --> introvert mind surrenders to ISvara, chants his name. ISvara establishes mind in heart.

As I have said, due to our extrovert nature, first one has to accept a person 'as it is'. That makes one neutral and peaceful. Mind calms down. Senses returns to their golaka sthAna i.e. they are pulled back) and mind doe not think much.

This is not the end. Move one step further. There is no need to reject or select anything. This behavior is a sing of neutral, calm and less-demanding, purified mind. Once introvert, there is no need to think of anyone after the issue / incident is over. Just let go and mind will turn inwards immediately. This is followed by surrender to ISvara, chanting his name.

To repeat (sorry for repetition)

From ISvara --> jiva bhAva --> ego / mind / buddhi --> body --> senses --> external objects

Our journey --> return to source

Withdraw senses from external objects --> introvert mind turns towards ISvara --> jiva bhAva (mind and ego) surrendered to ISvara --> jIva merges in ISvara (toal surrendr, unconditional surrender nad love)

Everything internal and external objects are due to buddhi attached to body. Remove buddhi then within AtmA, there is no internal and external. withbody, there is no external and internal. It is buddhi that makes it look internal and external w.r.t or say relative to physical body

Part III

Conspiracies against Bharat

Conspiracies by East India Co, Max Muller, Wilson, Jones and others

Namaste vedAntins,

There is a lot of talk which was initiated by (so-called) western scholars with evil intention to demean our shastras, our dev bhASA sanskrit, our purANas, smritis and grihya sUtras. This was not the work of one man or a few bunch of ontologists. This work was well planned strategy of British East India Company.

This page is intended to expose their evil intentions. The extracts are taken from the book **"The True History and the Religion of India: An Encyclopedia of Authentic Hinduism" by dharm Chakravarti H. D. Swami Prakashanand Saraswati** (Read more about author)

This is a *must read* book for every sincere seeker, specially bhArtiya brothers and sisters.

This is the first time in 400 years that such literature has been produced which gives the true vision of authentic Hinduism and details its continuous history of trillions of years with scientific evidences. (The author practices gauDiya vaiShNavism and so his understanding about philosophical truth is inclined towards that philosophy. However, his works related to Indian History is appreciable).

This book exposes the evil intentions by westerners. Swami ji has given authentic proofs along with excerpts of letters and publications published by westerners portraying our dharma and shastras in a demeaning way.

I will try to give some info about their actual 'opinion' about our shastra-s.

Disclaimer: I am not of the opinion that ALL westerners are biased against India and our shastras. There are good people and bad people everywhere. But certain people have elephant teeths. Just want to expose them as many take their opinions as genuine. No matter how much they are skilled, when the intention itself is not noble, the enquiry and the direction of thinking cannot be. We should not follow their guidelines no matter how much impressive they seem to be. Only noble, selfless intentions can yield good results.

Conspiracies by East India Company, Asiatic Society and Max Muller

Britishers in a quest to rule us have done a lot of conspiracies to damage our social, cultural, economic and religious systems. bhArata varSha, also known as Aryavart is the whole land beginning from foot of himAlaya-s to indian ocean. Britishers realized that our culture and spiritual base was so strong that it is not possible to convert people just by giving lectures on Bible. They concluded that the only way to push our way of life, and rule them was to demean their backbone - spirituality. To carry out their plan, they created Asiatic society and hired many professionals who were send to India with sole purpose of demeaning and denigrate our religious philosophy as inferior, mythology, primitive, supporting animal and human sacrifice, imaginative and full of superstitions.

Then began a period of collecting manuscripts and then interpret them in derogatory way. They also paidlofty amount to Max Muller, a german philologist, who is often credited of interpreting veda-s and bringing them to west and general public. MAx Muller was also one of them who purposefully interpreted our shastra-s in derogatory way. Other members of Asiatic Society were

Max Muller - Translation of rg veda in demeaning way and other articles tragetting our shastras to degrade them.

Sir William Jones

J. D. Peterson

F. Wilford

H.H. Wilson - Translation of Vishnu PurANa in demeaning way

F.E. Partiger - Critical analysis of purANas and veda-s in demeaning way

Sir Monier-Williams

Colonel Colin Mackenzie

Franz Bopp

Pandit Taranath (Indian writer hired to write on Hinduism in derogatory way)

(the list extends to 34 names).

The list also includes Britannica encyclopedia, who added Hindu words and explained their meanings in demeaning way.

They influenced Hindu writers like

Surendradas Gupta

Dr. R.G. Bhandarkar - highly influenced by Max Muller's works and his research

Bal Gandhar Tilak - who dated vedas to 1500-200 BC

S. Radhakrishnan - whose works are used for post graduation in History and religion of India

All these writers never wrote anything on Christianity. Why? If one is interested in studying religions of others, they also study their first religion. No one keeps studying and publishing foreign religion throughout their life and not study and publish something about their own religion. This shows the wicked mentality of the then Britishers.

- They forged our shastras which include bhaviSya purANa, by adding Jesus, changing date of Chandragupta Maurya calling him a contemporary of Alexander. To maintain consistency, they also pushed date of Lord Buddha and made him younger by 1500-2000 years. This also resulted in postponement of date of our beloved AcArya Adi Sankara, who as of 1999. should have been born 2500 years ago.
- They also changed and interpolated dharma smriti-s, grihya sutra-s, purANa-s, kalpa sutra-s and our vedA-s also. They did this to endorse animal killing, sleeping with animals for carnal pleasure and other prohibited acts are actually approved by our shastra-s
- They forged fake coins of Chandragupta Maurya to support their claims.
- They destroyed our historic records and evidences, destroyed our faith, our culture and left of opportunity to project us, bhArtiya-s as poors chaps of inferior intelligence, and of superstitious and primitive nature.
- Created fake Aryan Invasion theory to make us feel homeless. According to this theory, Germans (Aryans, sanskrit speaking people of high intelligence) migrated to India and they taught us everything.
- Demean our holy deva-bhASa, sanskrit. Initially they could not find any concrete evidence of any language prior to sanskrit. So they created a fake proto-indo-european language, which is the root of all.
- Compared our devatA-s with greek and other mythologies and equating them with nature spirits.
- Calling our purANa-s are mythology.

Disappearance of Pt. Taranath Shastry's 20 Years of research and collection of authentic manuscripts

There were some Indian Pundits who were genuinely interested in fact-finding. They saw the truth was different then that is propagated. One such revered Pundit was srI Narayana Sastry. He did 20 years of research, refuted false claims by Britishers and attempted to publish them. Since he did not had enough finding, he split his research in 8 volumes. In 1916, The first volume was published under the title, 'The Age of Shankra'. In the introduction of this book, Pt. Narayana Sastry wrote contents of full 800 pages book which

he was going to publish in future. In 1917, his other book, 'The Kings of Magadha' was published in which he extensively quoted from bhaviSya purANa. (Kaliyug Rajvrittant)

But immediately after that, his entire 20 years of hard work mysteriously disappeared and long with his written books and manuscripts and a year after that he died.

The facts he brought were

1. Established date of SankarAcArya 2593 of kaliyug to 2625, which comes to 509-477 BC, while refuting arguments of western writers and gave a full history of all five maths (including kamakoti math) of SankarAcArya with his discipline successions.

2. Refuted the arguments of western writers and correctly proved the date of mahAbhArat as 3139 BC

3. Established date of Lord Buddha in 19th century BC

4. Points of deliberate misinterpretations by European writers in the Rajtarangini and fixed the correct chronology of the kings of Kashmir

5. Refuted the Identity of Chandragupta Maurya with Sandracottus (Sandrocottus) by Jones

6. Produced unbroken list of historic dates of the kings of Nepal from the end of dvapAra yUga up to the 20th century

7. Refuted the arguments of the European writers and established the correct dates of the kings of Magadha from Brihadrath dynasty up to the Gupt dynasty according to the purANa-s ad also the inscriptions and the coins, etc

8. Pointed out fabrications of European writers how have they manipulated the interpretations of edicts, coins and the inscriptions to align it with Ashokvardhan of Maurya dynasty (which in fact was related to Ashokaditya of Gupt dynasty)

9. Gave full date-wise list of the king of lunar dynasties (chandra vanSa) and also of solar dynasties (sUrya vanSa) ... but that valuable work was all destroyed as a piece of their simple diplomatic game.

Even now, the records of pUrI, dvArkA, kAmakotI and GauDa sArasvat (GAuDapadAcArya's lineage) math-s shows that the actual birth of our gurU Adi Sankara was 509 - 477 BC.

The above facts were presented so that we can understand that, the reasons behind fact-finding are not always good. We should be proud of our culture and rich history and of course of our scriptures. It is needless to say that we should have complete faith in our scriptures. ?Unfortunately, even today (March 2014), our kids are taught history as fabricated by East India Company and sadly this wrong teach extends to the post graduation in Indian History and Religion.

Source: "The True History and the Religion of India: An Encyclopedia of Authentic Hinduism", Page 322 shows above 9 points.

To know more about such conspiracies, one *must* read a book titled "The True History and the Religion of India: An Encyclopedia of Authentic Hinduism" Swami Prakashanand Saraswati (titled dharm chakravarti, after this work). Swami ji provides authentic proofs and scientific evidences for all his claims and gives correct pictures of our glorious bhArat varSa. An intro is given here and few list of articles are given here. The book is also available at Flipkart and Motilal Banarsidass and Sons. It is published by Macmillan Publications.

Note: First few chapters may not sound interesting, but later on after chapter 9 or so, swami ji enters into in-depth analysis. Swami was disciple of Swami Brahmananda Saraswati of Jyoti MAth, but later left to jungle and spend 20 years in roaming, finally settled in Braj and practised Chaitanya bhakti'. Sometimes a tinge of his philosophy comes, but does not harm in any way to the contents of book.

Interpolations and fabrications were not difficult in those days.

Sir Monier Williams admits of Missionary aim for creating Monier-Williams Sanskrit-English Dictionary

MONIER-WILLIAMS English Sanskrit Dictionary Published by Oxford Press from 1811 was is regarded as monumental work which took years to compile. Boden Group was created by Colonel Boden to carry out the work. First to occupy chair was Sir H.H. Wilson. Second was Sir Monier Williams. In preface IX, Monier Williams commits that the chief aim for creating Sanskrit-English dictionary was to understand the philosophy of Native Indians. Then use it for conversion of Native Indians to Christianity.

He has also said that Old and New Testament was translated into Sanskrit. This would help Missionaries o understand sanskrit better.

Monier-Williams has also committed that due to wrong approach and policy by H.H. Wilson, the dictionary has suffered great loss.

Please find excerpts taken from Intro and Preface IX as proof below.

Source:
https://archive.org/stream/SanskritEnglishDictionaryMonierWilliamsMLBD/Sanskrit%20English%20Dictionary%20%20Monier%20Williams%20MLBD_djvu.txt

A SANSKRIT - ENGLISH DICTIONARY

ETYMOLOGICALLY AND PHILOLOGICALLY ARRANGED

with special reference to

COGNATE INDO-EUROPEAN LANGUAGES

SIR MONIER MONIER-WILLIAMS, M.A., K.C.I.E.

Boden Professor of Sanskrit

Hon. D.C.L. Oxon, Hon. LL.D. Calcutta, Hon. Ph.D. Gottingen
Hon. Fellow of University College and Sometime Fellow of Balliol College,

Oxford

...

Acknowledgment of Assistance Received.

Nor need I repeat the expression of my sense of obligation to my predecessor in the Boden Chair, Professor H. H. Wilson, who first led me to the study of Sanskrit about sixty years ago (in 1839), and furnished me with my first materials for an entirely new system of Sanskrit lexicography (see p. xi). All the words and meanings marked W. in the following pages in the present work rest on his authority.

...

INTRODUCTION.

Nevertheless, sincerity obliges me to confess that, during my long literary career, my mind has had to pass through a kind of painful discipline involving a gradual weakening of faith in the trustworthiness of my fellow men, not excepting that of my first venerated teacher. (Not this is most probably H. Wilson) I **began my studies, indeed, with much confidence in the thought that one man existed on whom I could lean as an almost infallible guide; but as I grew a little wiser, and my sensitiveness to error sharpened, I discovered to my surprise that I was compelled to reject much of his teaching as doubtful.** Nay, I am constrained to confess that as I advanced further on the path of knowledge, my trustfulness in others, besides my old master, experienced by degrees a series of disagreeable and unexpected shocks; till now, that I have arrived at nearly the end of my journey, I find myself left with my faith in the accuracy of human beings generally—and certainly not excepting myself—somewhat distressingly disturbed. Such painful feelings result, I fear, in my own case from a gradual and inevitable growth of the critical faculty during a long lifetime, and are quite consistent with a sense of gratitude for the effective aid received from my collaborators, without which, indeed, I could not have brought this work to a conclusion.

In my original Preface I expressed my thanks to each and all of the scholars who aided me in the compilation of the first edition, and whose names in the chronological order of their services were as follows

The late Rev. J. Wenger, of the Baptist Mission, Calcutta; Dr. Franz Kielhorn, afterwards Superintendent of Sanskrit Studies in Deccan College, Poona, and now Professor of Sanskrit in the University of Gottingen; Dr. Hermann Brunnhofer; Mr. A. E. Gough, M.A., of Lincoln College, Oxford, sometime Professor in the Government Colleges of Benares, Allahabad, and Calcutta; and lastly, Mr. E. L. Hogarth, M.A., of Brasenose College, sometime Head Master of the Government Provincial School at Calicut.

...

INTRODUCTION.

SECTION I.

As to my own course, the same consideration which actuated my predecessor operated in my case, when **I was elected to fill the Boden Chair in his room in 1860.**

...

Nevertheless I could not quite renounce an idea which my classical training at Oxford had forcibly impressed upon my mind—viz. that the primary object of a Sanskrit Dictionary should be to exhibit, by a lucid etymological arrangement, the structure of a language which, as most people know, is not only the elder sister of Greek,

but the best guide to the structure of Greek, as well as of every other member of the Aryan or Indo-European family—a language, in short, which is the very key-stone of the science of comparative philology. This was in truth the chief factor in determining the plan which, as I now proceed to show, I ultimately carried into execution.

Note: This is the reason why Monier Williams thought that the dictionary has suffered great loss.

1 This will be found in the library presented by me to the Indian Institute, Oxford.

2 The main object was really a missionary one, as I have shown in the Preface to this volume (p. ix), and in my Life of H. H. Wilson appended to my Reminiscences of Old Haileybury College (published by A. Constable & Co.).

3 His first Dictionary was published in 1819, and his second in 1832, while he *(H. H. Wilson)* was a candidate for the Boden Professorship.

...

PREFACE TO THE NEW EDITION.

ix

In explanation I must draw attention to the fact that I am only the second occupant of the Boden Chair, and that its Founder, Colonel Boden, stated most explicitly in his will (dated August 15, 1811) that the special object of his munificent bequest was to promote the translation of the Scriptures into Sanskrit, so as ' to enable his countrymen to proceed in the conversion of the natives of India to the Christian Religion' V

...

4 In his address proposing himself for election to the Boden Electors, Professor H. H. Wilson laid stress on what he had done for ' the rendering of Scripture Terms into the Sanskrit language/ It was doubtless on this account that after he was elected he urged me to compile an English-Sanskrit Dictionary—a work never before attempted. I laboured at this for about seven years, and although the result (published in a thick volume by the Directors of the East India Company in 1851) cannot, I fear, be said to meet the needs of the present day, yet it should be borne in mind that it was pioneering work. Nor can it be said to have been useless, seeing that seven years after its publication the following testimony to its utility was voluntarily tendered by the Rev. J. Wenger, translator of the Bible into Sanskrit and Editor of Dr. Yates' Sanskrit. Die-

X

PREFACE TO THE NEW EDITION,

...the promotion of a better knowledge of the religions and customs of India, as the best key to a knowledge of the religious needs of our great Eastern Dependency. **My very first public lecture delivered after my election in 1860 was on 'The Study of Sanskrit in Relation to Missionary Work in India' (published in 1861).**

...

It was on this account that, when my distinguished predecessor and teacher, Professor H. H. Wilson, was a candidate for the Chair in 1832, his lexicographical labours were put forward as his principal claim to election.

Surely then it need not be thought surprising, if following in the footsteps of my venerated master, I have made it the chief aim of my professorial life to provide facilities for the translation of our sacred Scriptures into Sanskrit 4 , and for ... 1 I cannot allow myself to think that the Dictionary has suffered much from this cause, except perhaps during the collaboration of the late Dr. Schonberg, the rapid impairment of whose powers did not at first strike me so as to make me aware of the necessity for increased vigilance on my part (see p. xxxi).

M. F. Monier-Williams.

May 4, 1899

Source:
https://archive.org/stream/SanskritEnglishDictionaryMonierWilliamsMLBD/Sanskrit%20English%20Dictionary%20%20Monier%20Williams%20MLBD_djvu.txt

Max Muller, H.H. Wilson, William Jones, F. E. Partiger et al and Britannica Encyclopedia

Many eastern and western scholars have appraised the work of Max Muller and H.H> Wilson. However their real intention behind translation our SAStra-s was to present them in a demeaning way.

A website is created to expose their real intention and spread the truth. Instead of copy pasting articles, it is better to redirect readers to the original content.

Max Muller

Asiatic Researches group of people. and H.H. Wilson

F. E. Pargiter

S. Radhakrishnan

Organized efforts of the British to destroy our culture and religion, and mutilate our history

First effort of Jones (1784) and the secret planning

The fiction of Aryan invasion, introduction of English language, and the suppression of Sanskrit language.

Major falsehoods as promoted by the British

How did the British fabricate and destroy the historic records of India and misguide the whole world?

There are many more links, please visit the original website for further details.

List of all Articles Published | Sitemap

[under construction]

Part IV

Adi Sankara - A Jagadguru

ADI SANKARA - A JAGADGURU

Last Updated on 08-Dec-2022 - Updated Current SankarAcArya-s (Shankaracharyas)
Added YouTube Channels of all five Shankaracharyas,
Updated GauDapadAchArya KavaLe math details - added the list of all Gurus (mathAdhipatI-s) in the lineage.)
Added FAke SankarAchArya-s

Last Update: 05-Dec-2022 - Updated GauDapadAchArya KavaLe math details and Chitrapur Math details.
2nd last Update: 11-Sep-2022 - Updated SankarAchArya of Jyotirmath and Dvarka (sharda) matha
Earlier Update: 23rd January 2015

Adi Sankara - A Jagadguru

There are many explanations given for one to become jagadguru. Some say that by writing commentaries on prasthAntrayI, one becomes a jagadguru, some say by touring India and winning debates make one jagadguru, while some say the one who spreads nAma sankirtan, the yuga dharma, is a jagadguru. Lets examine what makes one a jagadguru.

bhArat is soaked in spirituality. There are many traditions, Saiva, Shakta, vaiSnav, yOga, nyAya, cArvAka, Agamic, vAmcAra mArg (left hand path), tantra, etc. Our scriptures are monotheists, but they have pluralistic approach in a way that many forms of God are given, who are manifestation of brahman. A jagadguru in my opinion is the one who teaches all paths, harmonizes all paths, do not contradict veda-s, smriti-s and purANa-s and blends all into one harmonious system. A jagadguru removes misconceptions, corrects flaws in practice like removing weed gathered over a period of time, refines it, and offers in pure distilled form.

In this context, a jagadguru must have mastery over not only one siddhAnta, but many siddhanta-s. Obviously, it is almost impossible for human being to have this knowledge. Hence only an avatar can be a jagadguru. Our AcArya Adi Sankara possessed those qualities of a jagadguru. From his biographies, and his extant works, we come to know that

1. Adi Shankara in his commentaries has cited references of
    1. Shruti-s (veda-s and Upanishads) - Karma Kand, MimAmsA
    2. Smriti-s (Dharmashastra-s) - Ethical and Moral Laws for universal well-being and harmony. Also represents Practical life.
    3. PurANa-s - For instilling Bhakti. He has cited as many as 12 PurANa-s including upa-purANa-s, thereby indicating their importance. He didn't interpret them only from Symbolic, Mephoric or esoteric point of view, he took stories as literal.
    4. ItihAsa (MahabhArata and RAmAyaNa) - For cultivating bhakti
2. AcArya also commented on

    1. Vishnu Sahasranama explaining meaning of various names (attributes) of Vishnu and indicated Brahma-Vishnu-Shiva abheda i.e. non-different.
    2. Patanjali Yoga Sutra-s - AcArya wrote Sub commentary on Patanjali Yoga Sutra-s by the name Yoga tArAvalI. It is only a 28 verse hymn, but considered as very important and is highly revered by Yogi-s
    3. On parts of Apastamba Dharma Sutra (sub-commentary on the chapter about inner atman), with the name AdhyAtma-paTala-vivaraNa (आध्यात्म-पटल-विवरण). (paTala means part, section or chapter of a book)
3. AcArya composed an essence of tantra in his work prapancasAra tantra and saundarya lahiri.
4. Was a master of mantra sAdhanA. He revived srI yantra upAsanA by re-consecrating srI yantra at kAmAkhyA devI temple at kamakoti (Kanchi) and other temples.
5. Apart from this, AcArya composed PrakaraNa Grantha-s. PrakaraNa Grantha-s are the basic texts that teach basics of Advaita Vedanta. Adi Shankara, travelled length and breath of India and knew that it would be difficult for many to understand Advaita. Hence he created independent grantha-s. Important PrakaraNa Grantha-s are , Tatva Bodh (very basic, often recommended to be read first), Atma Bodh, AparokshAnubhUti, Vivek CuDAmaNi (though basic, contains very profound knowledge), Upadesha Sahasri, prabodh sudhAkara (talk about both saguNa and nirguNa brahman and two path, bhakti and GYAna).
6. He also composed many Independent hymns for instilling devotion, Adi Shankara also composed devotional hyms to various deities. Popular ones are - DakshinAmurtI Stotra, Shiva PancAkshara Stotra, Veda SAra Shiva Stavan, Saundarya lahiri, SivAnanda lahiri, Guru pAdukA stotram, Guru aShTakam, etc
7. Adi Shankara reconstructed and repaired many temples. The famous Jagannatha Puri Temple was once deserted and the idol was missing. The Lord appeared in his dream, gave Idol's location and ordered him to install the Idol. Adi Shankara not only installed Idol, but he established one of the amnaya peetha (math) right there. This math is known by the name PurI math. Acharya reconsecrated Sri Yantra at Kamakshi Temple in Kanchi thereby reviving temple worship and riving Sakta tradition.
8. To manage temple, naturally agama-s and Vedic Karma Kand are necessary. Hence he supported them too.
9. Attempt for Universal Harmony - Adi Shankara propagated smArta sampradAya, worship for gaNeSa, Siva, Sakti, viShNu and sUrya as different manifestations of same brahman. He added sixth deity skanda for universal harmony.

All advaitins earlier were smArta-s. smArta-s are the ones who follow smriti-s and worship pancha-devatA (gaNeSa, Siva, Sakti, viShNu and sUrya). There are 18 smriti-s, some of them are Manu Smriti, Apastamba Dharma Smriti, Gautam, Yagnavalkya, Atri, Daksha, Shankha, etc. Smriti-s are typically called as 'notes from memory'. Great Rishi-s what had mastered Veda-s wrote smriti-s in accordance with Veda-s (shturi-s). Hence even shruti-s are also important to smArta-s. Smriti-s are also called as dharma Shastra-s (laws code, code of conduct) and are created for universal well being and harmony. Adi SankarAcArya has quoted many smriti-s in his bhashya-s. Which means that he himself gave importance to them. dharma SAstra-s, which provide moral and ethical laws, permit us to take sword for self protection and also allow Brahmins who are starving to take up occupations like trading and even take up the dharma of sword as a last resort.

If we stick to 'Brahma Satya Jagat Mithya', then dharma shastra-s are also useless and everything is illusion which is not true, as evident from his commentaries.

Our AchArya says, until you attain inner purity, you will have to do nitya karma and carry out your duties.

Critics are of the opinion that devotional compositions praising more than one form of God like kruSNa / govindA or Siva or tripurAsundari cannot be composed by Adi Sankara as they do not match with his core philosophy of advaita. Howeve, they do not take into account many factors which are explained in detail in the article 'Questioning Authenticity of works attributed to Adi Sankara'. karma, upAsanA, yOga, Sakta, Agama-s etc are the foundation on which advaita rests. Advaita is the mountain peak, while ways to reach them are many. Base of mountain is very broad, but peak is only one. Other objections like authenticity of non-sAttvika purANa-s and Adi Sankara did not preached smArta dharma, but was a vaiShNava are replied in relevant sections viz Authenticity of purANa-s, upa-purANa-s and sthala purANa-s and Adi Sankara preached smArta dharma

There are famous SubhASitA-s which sum-up his teachings are:

Ruchinam vaichitryad rijukutil nana path jusham;

nrinam ekogamyastvamasi pyasamarnavmiti"

"Due to the differences in individual dispositions, people follow different paths, but you are the only destination of all of them, just as the sea is the destination of all the waters"

Akashat patitam toyam sagaram prati gacchati,

sarva deva namaskaram Keshavam prati gacchati"

"All the water fallen from the sky goes to the sea,

salutations to all the gods reaches to the KeSava"

Note: *Here keSava is not kriShNa, a person, but the supreme Self, formless Brahman under it's sway trinity works. (ref here for explanation)*

There is no shortcoming or incompleteness in his teachings, nor advaita is an incomplete philosophy. It is the crest jewel of vedAnta, and represents highest philosophical truth after knowing this truth, nothing more needs to be known proclaims shruti.

Adi Shankaracharya only established advaita as highest philosophical truth. AcArya did not demean any form of God, nor did condemn or opposed any philosophy. Our AcArya accepted them upto a certain point, found them incomplete and asked us to rise above them. According to our AcArya, without knowledge (direct experience of Self), liberation is not possible.

He himself did not gave Jnana to any grihastha and gave utmost importance to sanyAsa for attaining brahma-vidyA, as one can fully devote all 24 hours to God. To practice advaita

vedAnta, vairAgya and burning desire for liberation are extremely important. He had only 4 disciples, that too after walking the length and breadth of India. This shows that he did not teach advaita to all.

For masses, he also composed hymns for various deities , repaired temples, reconsecrated sri yantra-s. This means he encouraged deity worship, shakta-s tantra (in pure form), karma kand (mimAmsA), but he did not consider them as the supreme goal. So he asks us to rise above them after you attain inner purity.

Unfortunately some parts of his biography, as some say, is corrupted and hence rejected by rivals, and only his prasthAntrayI Bhashya is considered as authentic and are undoubtedly attributed to Adi Shankaracharya. If we blend even some of his hymns, his biography and his bhashya-s, we can understand why he is called as Jagat Guru.

According to mAdhaviya shankara Digvijay (written by VidyaraNya Svami), his gurU gOvindpAdaa is considered as incarnation of Shesha Naaga and the same shesha Naaga in earlier incarnation was Maharshi Patanjali.

saundarya lahiri is also considered as very powerful composition on Devi bhavAnI, specially the first 40 verses (out of total 100) are said to be very potent. Then there is Dakshinamurti stotra, Shiva Panchakshara stotra and Veda Sara Shiva Stotra is also attributed to him, all considered authentic atleast by Kanchi Paramacharya. They show all harmonious attitude of our AcArya.

Citing 12 purANa-s which includes 3 up-purANa-s in his Vishnu Sahasranam Bhashya shows that he was in full support of purANa-s and he did not devised symbolic meaning. Hence he even propagated bhakti. He also cited tamasic and rajasic puranas which means that unlike Vaishnava-s he did not considered them as leading to hell, or in other words, those verses are interpolations.

In his lesser known work, prabOdha sudhAkara, AcArya goes on to praise bhakti towards kruShNa as the ultimate goal of life. While describing how to meditate on various forms of bhagavAn kruShNa, AcArya goes into ecstasy and claims that for the ones socked in pure bhakti, there is no need to liberation. (pra. su 240, 250). Adi Sankara also recalls many lilA-s of kruShNa bhagavAn.

bhagavAn viShNu can be said to be our AcArya's ISTa devatA, but he never denigrated any other form of God like Siva or Sakti.

Our AcArya blended yOga, tantra (Sakta), karma kANDa, upAsanA kAnDa, GYAna kAnDa, Agama SAstra into one harmonious system and established advaita as the final destination by reconciling contradictions and difference among various religio-philosophical systems.

In my opinion, these are the reasons why our AchArya is reverentially called as Jagadguru.

Life of Sringeri AcArya SrI Abhinava vidyAtirthA mahAsvAmI

There are and were many AcArya-s who were actively engaged in polemical debates to defend advaita. However, spiritual teachings are far far away from polemical debates. A book, 'Yoga, Enlightenment and Perfection of Sri Abhinava Vidyatirtha Mahaswami (AV)', Guru of current Sringeri Shankaracharya SrI bhArtI tirtha (current SankarAcArya as in 2015) shows us that paramAcArya AV had been passed through many types of sAdhanA-s including haTha yoga, kundalini yoga, karma kANDa (nitya karma vidhi), vedAnta (advaita), narasihma and SArdAmbA upAsanA.

We will have to understand that a guru will never instruct his beloved disciple who is also chosen by ambA / SArdAmbA herself as the next successor to the peetham, in false, fake SAstra-s. From the book we can conclude that Sringeri AcArya-s consider all 108 upanishands as authentic even though they are not quoted by any pUrvAcArya-s. an example is sarasvatI rahasya upanishad.

Meditative journey of AV will help us to understand why SankarACarya-s are called as 'jagadguru'.

1. Lord Shiva himself taught Hatha Yoga and some kriyas in a series of 7 consecutive dreams
2. Amba gave her knowledge of chakras, kundalini and Nadis like ida, pingala, etc. He could even hear the voice saying that this is anahat chakra
3. When he was meditating on Narasimha, he got so much intimate to him that he experienced that every thing is an offering to Narasimha like bathing, etc actually goes to him only.
4. When he experienced Narasimha as an antar yamin, Narasimha's form disappeared
5. Amba gave him her darshan
6. He meditated on Lord Shiva with Dhyana sloka of Dakshinamurthy stotra (some consider it as not authored by Adi Sankara, but here a guru has instructed his beloved disciple, who the guru has already announced a shis successor when he gave sanyasa at the age of 13 1/2 years).
7. AV then meditated on Lord shiva with Snake as his ornament (thats what the verse was). After an hour, when he opened his eyes, he saw a snake loosely coiled round his neck. He touches the snake. Snake seemed to have liked his touched and rested his fin on his right cheek. After 5 minutes snake left him and AV returned to ashram (He was meditating on hearby mountain).
8. Another day, his guru blessed him with Mantra 'Om Namah Shivaya' (that same guru had initiated him into Naramsimh upasana) and that day, AV had a darshan of Lord Shiva. Lord Shiva blessed him and ordered him to move on to Advaita sadhana.
9. His guru then taught him advaita sadhana. During all these teaining, Av was young and he had not studied all shastras.

10. He went into samadhi with the help of Laya Yoga (Gorakhnath's way), hearing sound and then mind merging into brahman.
11. AV entered into samAdhi as per advaita vedAnta. With practice, he could easily enter into samAdhi in short time.
12. His Guru made him to enter into samadhiby mere will when they both meditated at same time. Finally one day, he got permanently established in Brahman

Then his guru Chandrashekhara Saraswati brought him down. as he would not even come back to body consciousness, but his guru had different plans for him. He had to take care of math. So he asked him to come down from samadhi. AV also discussed Saraswati Rahasya upanishad regarding different types of Samadhi. This upanishad is also not accepted by some as no one except upanishad Brahma Yogin has written commentary.

Sringeri Acharyas also revere works like Madhurastakam (मधुराष्टकम) by Sri Vallabhacharya, tulsidAsakrit SrI rAmacaritmAnasa (तुल्सिदासकृत श्री रामचरित् मानस)

Since they have meditated in many ways as prescribed in SAstra-s, they can guide people practicing those disciples. Practicing one than one discipline and achieving siddhi (Atma-siddhi) is very very rare. Only blessed souls chosen by paramAtmAn can have such rare qualities to successfully pass through many kinds of meditative techniques.

A brief intro of the above mentioned book is given by advaita academy. This book is available at bookstores managed by Sringeri Matha.

Birth date of Adi Sankara

There are many controversies regarding dates of Adi Sankara. All agree that Adi Sankara lived for 32 years. Scholars have arrived at two dates. 509 BC - 477 BC and 788 AD - 820 AD. Some suggest the date of 720 - 752 AD. However, Date of Birth is of little importance as his teachings remain the same irrespective of his birth date.

Current SankarAcArya-s (Shankaracharyas)

[Updated on 08-Dec-2022]

[Names of SankarAcArya-s updated on 11-Sep-2022. GauDapadAcArya-s are as on 05th Dec 2022]
[For any changes / corrections - please email - indiaspirituality [at] gmail.com]

Note 08-Dec-2022: There is a change in order of headings in word document and on website. New Google Sites do not allow tables to be added. Hence, the list of lineages of all five matha-s and KavaLe matha are created in Excel file and uploaded on Google Drive. The sheet is then linked on the web page. For this a new section

has been created titled Lineage of Sankaracharya Matha-s (List in Excel). Since this is not needed in word file, the table of lineage is added in correct place.

There are some fake godmen, who claim to be a SankarAcArya and attach themselves to any of the four maths. There are four authentic petha-s. The fifth one is Kanchi Math. There are also four GauDapadAcArya Maths.

In order for the proper following of these four matha-s SrI Adi Sankara has written certain rules to be followed by all four matha-s. The two grahta-s (manuals) are - mathAmnAya anushAshanam and mathAmnAya setu. They mention only four matha-s as Amnaya peetham-s. 'amnaya' means 'vedic'. We only accept the Kanchi Math as the fifth matha as it is very old matha and has given us illustrous AchArya-s. There is communication of Kanchi Matha with the amnaya peetham-s and so they all are in contact with each other. There is informal acceptance of Kanchi Matha too but not any other matha-s.

Please refer to the following Videos on YouTube

1. Does Adi Shankaracharya Have Any Relation With Kanchi Peeth? - Swami Nishchalananda Saraswati
2. क्या चारों शंकराचार्य आपस में मेलजोल रखते हैं ? - Swami Nishchalananda Saraswati
3. शंकराचार्य जी के द्वारा नकली संतों का पर्दाफाश I - Swami Nishchalananda Saraswati on Kanchi Shankaracharya
4. कौन हैं वर्तमान के प्रामाणिक शंकराचार्य ? - Swami Avimukteshvarananda Saraswati
5. शंकराचार्य बनने के लिए कौन कौन सी योग्यता होनी चाहिये? - Swami Avimukteshvarananda Saraswati
6. चतुराम्नाय शङ्कराचार्य पीठों से सम्बन्धित मूलभूत जानकारियां - Swami Avimukteshvarananda Saraswati
7. शंकराचार्य जी के द्वारा नकली संतों का पर्दाफाश I - Swami Nishchalananda Saraswati on Kanchi Shankaracharya

Please find names of current SankarAcArya-s of four maths

(not written in itrans form)

1. **Sringeri Peetham** also known as **Sringeri Sarada Peetham** (South India): Swami Bharti Tirtha (biography) (36th)
(from 1989-present),
Successor: Swami Vidhushekhar Bharati (37th) - Sishya svikAra on 23rd January 2015 (initiated into Sanyasa and declaration as Successor) (Lineage Source)

2. **Sharada Peetham** also known as **Dwarka Peetham** (West India): Swami Sadananda Saraswati (12-Sep-2022-present), preceded by Swami Swaroopanand Saraswati (holding 2 peethas) - Attained Mahasamadhi on 11-Sep-2022 at the age of 99 years.

3. **Jyoti / Jyotir Peetham** (North India): Swami Avimukteshvaranand Saraswati (12-Sep-2022-present), preceded by Swami Swaroopanand Saraswati (holding 2 peethas) - Attained Mahasamadhi on 11-Sep-2022 at the age of 99 years.

Swami Svaroopananda Saraswati left home at the age of 9 years. Initiated into SanyAsa in 1950. Seated on SankarAchArya peetham in 1981. Practitioner of Sri Vidya Upasana, guru- bhai (brother monk) of Maharshi Mahesh Yogi. Swami ji established Paramhamsi Ganga Ashram in Madhyapradesha where he meditated on a rock for many years. (Some say he meditated for 10 years on the rock Vichar Shila). Source

Swami Avimukteshvaranand Saraswati of Jyotirmath and Swami Sadananda Saraswati of Sharada Matha, Dwarka, were both designated by Swami Swaroopanand Saraswati.

Swami Avimukteshvaranand Saraswati is a practitioner of SrI vidyA upAsanA or parAmbA rAjarAjeSvarI trIpurAsundrI sAdhanA or SrI yantra sAdhanA. He adds shrI and 1008 in his title. So he is svAmISrI 1008-guru Avimukteshvaranand Saraswati.

- Added SrI (श्री) to svAmI (स्वामी) and became svAmISrI (स्वामीश्री) as he is a SrI vidyA upAsaka.
- This instruction to practice this sAdhanA was given by his Gurudev Swami Sampoornananda Saraswati and so he added Guru (गुरु) to his title.
- He is not officially honored title of '1008' but as upon the orders of his Gurudeva has established parama dharma sansada 1008 as a part of his sevA in order to protect and establish the principles of sanAtana dharma as propogated by Adi SankarAchArya jI. It is 1008 Asana-s meanings 1008 seats dedicated to the entire world. Seat seat has been designated an area (a kshetra) who are connected with svAmISrI (SwamiShri, स्वामीश्री). So he added 1008 to his title.
- Swami Avimukteshvaranand Saraswati is the sanyAsa name given to him by his Gurudev Swami Sampoornananda Saraswati.
- Thus his title became svAmISrI 1008.guru svAmI avimukteSvarAnanda sarasvatI (1008 Guru Swamishri Avimukteshananda Saraswati, १००८ गुरु स्वामीश्री अविमुक्तेश्वरानंद सरस्वती)

Source: स्वामिश्रीः1008 क्या है?.

Swami Sadananda Saraswati has his own YouTube channel. There is also another YouTube channel Kulvriksha created by his followers.

4. **Govardhan Peetham, Puri** (East India): Swami Nishchalanand Saraswati

5. **Kanchi Kamakoti peetham** (South India, Tamil Nadu): Swami Sankara Vijayendra Saraswati (70th) from 28-Feb-2018, Preceded by Swami Jayendra Sarasvati (69th) (attained Mahasamadhi on 28-Feb-2018) at the age of 82 years. Initiated into sanyAsa and declared as successor on 22-Mar-1954 by Swami Chandrashekharendra Sarasvati VIII (68th), the Walking God. Paramacharya was initiated into SanyAsa and declared as a successor on 22-Mar-1954. (source)

YouTube channels of All five Sankaracharya-s

[Added on 08-Dec-2022]

1. Jyotir matha, Chamoli, Uttarakhand - Swami Avimukteshvarananda Saraswati - 1008.guru
2. Govardhan Matha, Puri, Orrisa - Swami Nishchalalanda Saraswati - GovardhanMath
3. Sharada Matha, Dwarka, Gujarat - Swami Sadananda Saraswati - Swami Sadanand Saraswati Ji Maharaj Dwarka Gujarat / Kula
4. Sringeri Sharada Matha, Sringeri, Bangaluru - Swami Bharati Tirtha / Swami Vidushekhara Bharati - SharadaPeetham
5. Kanchi Kamakoti Matha, Kanchi, Tamil Nadu - Swami Shankara Vijayendra Saraswati - KanchiMath

Lineage of Gurus

सदाशिवसमारम्भां शङ्कराचार्यमध्यमाम् ।
अस्मदाचार्य पर्यन्तां वन्दे गुरुपरम्पराम् ॥

Obeisance unto the hoary Guru Parampara, beginning from Lord Sri Sadashiva upto the present Acharya with Sri Shankaracharya in middle.

Lineage of all five matha-s is given. As per records available with Sringeri Matha, it is believed that SrI Adi Sankara was born in 7th Century AD and lived on for 32 years. Adi Sankara was born in the year 788 AD and attained Videha Mukti in the year 820 AD. Rest all three mathas and Kanchi Matha believes that Adi Sankara was born in 509 BC and attained Mahasamadhi and went to Kailash on 477 BC after spending 32 years in bhArata.

All Lineage starts with either Narayana or Sadashiva which are the trinity. This is the Divine group. Then comes the Semi-divine group in which the rishi-s of Purana-s and itihAsa-s are listed. This list also includes names of SrI gauDapAdAchArya ji, SrI govindapAdAchARya jI, guru of Adi SankarAchArya jI and considered as incarnation of SeSha nAga or Maharshi PatanjalI and Adi Sankara who is incarnation of bhagavAna dAkshiNamUrtI (Siva). Then follows the first head of peetham-s, the four direct disciples of Sri Adi SankarAchArya jI (Adi Sankara, Adi Sankara Bhagavada AchArya or Adi Sankara BhavadpAda).

A detailed biography of Sri Avhinav Vidyateertha Mahaswami, guru of current SankarAchArya Bharati Teertha, Yoga, Enlightenment And Perfection is available as ebook, pdf and as a printed copy. Reader must have gone through an earlier section dedicated to him on his page. For more titles please visit their publication page.

In order to continue the propagation of dharma and to defend it, Adi Sankara had established four peethams one each in north, east, west and south. These peethams are known as Amnaya Peethams. Amnaya means vedic.

For details of peethams, their associated veda-s and other details, please visit Anmaya Peethams page of Sringeri Matha's website.

Sringeri Matha

Sringeri Matha has an illustrious lineage that has produced great saints and heads of Matha. As per the tradition of this matha, the SankarAchArya first selects his successor and he is given sannyasa dikshA. This process is known as 'SiShya svikAra'. On the same day of giving sannyasa and his new monastic name, SankarAchArya also declares the new sanyAsI to be his successor, the next SankarAchArya. In most of the cases, the new designate is a young and unmarried. The current successor svAmI vidushekhara bhAratI was about 22 years old at the time of giving dikshA. This can happen only if the guru is extremely capable and most probably Self-realised, and/or he gets orders and approval from SAradAmba i.e. mA ambA (Maa Amba, Maa Sarada). New shishya in his pre-monastic life already had inclination to live the spiritual life and has already studied some shAstra-s. The new shishya is then trained in all shAstra-s. He practises intense sAdhanA and it is believed guru also grants him the state of Self Realisation.

Following list is picked up from the official website. They have also given brief biographies of few recent SankarAchArya-s. Life of Sri Abhinav Vidyatirth Mahaswami is worth studying. It is available as a book

Divine Group
Lord Sadashiva
Lord Narayana
Lord Brahma

Semi-Divine Group
Vasishta Maharishi
Shakti Maharishi
Parashara Maharishi
Veda Vyasa
Sri Shuka Acharya
Sri Gaudapada Acharya
Sri Govinda Bhagavatpada
Sri Shankara Bhagavatpada

#	Jagadgurus of the Sringeri Sharada Peetham	Period of Reign (CE)
1.	Sri Shankara Bhagavatpada	820 (videha-mukti)
2.	**Sri Sureshwaracharya**	**820 – 834**
3.	Sri Nityabodaghana	834-848
4.	Sri Jnanaghana	848 – 910
5.	Sri Jnanottama	910 – 954
6.	Sri Jnanagiri	954 – 1038
7.	Sri Simhagiri	1038 – 1098
8.	Sri Ishwara Tirtha	1098 – 1146
9.	Sri Nrisimha Tirtha	1146 – 1229
10.	Sri Vidya Tirtha	1229 – 1333
11.	Sri Bharati Tirtha	1333 – 1380
12.	Sri Vidyaranya	1380 – 1386
13.	Sri Chandrasekhara Bharati I	1386 – 1389
14.	Sri Nrisimha Bharati I	1389 – 1408
15.	Sri Purushottama Bharati I	1408 – 1448
16.	Sri Shankara Bharati	1448 – 1455
17.	Sri Chandrasekhara Bharati II	1455 – 1464
18.	Sri Nrisimha Bharati II	1464 – 1479
19.	Sri Purushottama Bharati II	1479 – 1517
20.	Sri Ramachandra Bharati	1517 – 1560
21.	Sri Nrisimha Bharati III	1560 – 1573

22.	Sri Nrisimha Bharati IV	1573 – 1576
23.	Sri Nrisimha Bharati V	1576 – 1600
24.	Sri Abhinava Nrisimha Bharati	1600 – 1623
25.	Sri Sacchidananda Bharati I	1623 – 1663
26.	Sri Nrisimha Bharati VI	1663 – 1706
27.	Sri Sacchidananda Bharati II	1706 – 1741
28.	Sri Abhinava Sacchidananda Bharati I	1741 – 1767
29.	Sri Nrisimha Bharati VII	1767 – 1770
30.	Sri Sacchidananda Bharati III	1770 – 1814
31.	Sri Abhinava Sacchidananda Bharati II	1814 – 1817
32.	Sri Nrisimha Bharati VIII	1817 – 1879
33.	Sri Sacchidananda Shivabhinava Nrisimha Bharati	1879 – 1912
34.	Sri Chandrasekhara Bharati III	1912 – 1954
35.	Sri Abhinava Vidyatirtha	1954 – 1989
36.	**Sri Bharati Tirtha**	**1989 – Present**
37.	Sri Vidhushekhara Bharati	Successor-Designate

Source: https://sringeri.net/jagadgurus

Disciplinic succession of Jagadguru Shankaracharya for 2,500 years.

Acharyas of Govardhan Puri Matha (Lineage)

Source: https://govardhanpeeth.org/en/about-us-en/adi-shankaracharya-successor

S.no.	Name	Period-circa	GatKali		Corresponding BCE/CE	
			From	To	From	To
1	Anantashri Padmapad	25	2617	2642	-484	-459
2	Anantashri Shoolapani	20	2642	2662	-459	-439
3	Anantashri Narayan	17	2662	2679	-439	-422
4	Anantashri Vidyaranya	18	2679	2697	-422	-404
5	Anantashri Vamdev	16	2697	2713	-404	-388
6	Anantashri Padmanabh	15	2713	2728	-388	-373
7	Anantashri Jagannatha	14	2728	2742	-373	-359
8	Anantashri Madhureshwar	10	2742	2752	-359	-349
9	Anantashri Govind	21	2752	2773	-349	-328
10	Anantashri Shridhar	18	2773	2791	-328	-310
11	Anantashri Madhavanand	17	2791	2808	-310	-293
12	Anantashri Krishnabrahmanand	18	2808	2826	-293	-275
13	Anantashri Ramanandteertha	16	2826	2842	-275	-259
14	Anantashri Vagishwarteertha	15	2842	2857	-259	-244
15	Anantashri Parameshwarteertha	14	2857	2871	-244	-230

16	Anantashri Gopalteertha	12	2871	2883	-230	-218
17	Anantashri Janardanteertha	14	2883	2897	-218	-204
18	Anantashri Jnanandateertha	20	2897	2917	-204	-184
19	Anantashri Brihadaranya	19	2917	2936	-184	-165
20	Anantashri Mahadevteertha	18	2936	2954	-165	-147
21	Anantashri Brahmanandateertha	16	2954	2970	-147	-131
22	Anantashri Ramanandteertha	15	2970	2985	-131	-116
23	Anantashri Sadashivateertha	14	2985	2999	-116	-102
24	Anantashri harishwaranandteertha	12	2999	3011	-102	-90
25	Anantashri Bodhanandteertha	14	3011	3025	-90	-76
26	Anantashri Ramakrishnateertha	20	3025	3045	-76	-56
27	Anantashri Chidbodhatmateertha	10	3045	3055	-56	-46
28	Anantashri Tattvaksharteertha	18	3055	3073	-46	-28
29	Anantashri Shankarteertha	16	3073	3089	-28	-12
30	Anantashri Vasudevteertha	20	3089	3109	-12	8
31	Anantashri Hayagrivateertha	17	3109	3126	8	25
32	Anantashri Shrutishwarateertha	14	3126	3140	25	39
33	Anantashri Vidyanandateertha	20	3140	3160	39	59
34	Anantashri Mukundanandateertha	18	3160	3178	59	77
35	Anantashri Hiranyagarbhateertha	19	3178	3197	77	96
36	Anantashri Nityanandateertha	18	3197	3215	96	114
37	Anantashri Shivananda	16	3215	3231	114	130
38	Anantashri Yogishwarteertha	18	3231	3249	130	148
39	Anantashri Sudarshan	15	3249	3264	148	163
40	Anantashri Vyomkesh	17	3264	3281	163	180
41	Anantashri Damodarteertha	21	3281	3302	180	201
42	Anantashri Yoganandateertha	20	3302	3322	201	221
43	Anantashri Golokesh	21	3322	3343	221	242
44	Anantashri Shrikrishnandateertha	18	3343	3361	242	260
45	Anantashri Devanandateertha	23	3361	3384	260	283
46	Anantashri Chandrachudteertha	15	3384	3399	283	298
47	Anantashri Halayudhateertha	14	3399	3413	298	312
48	Anantashri Siddhasevyateertha	15	3413	3428	312	327
49	Anantashri Tarakatmateertha	20	3428	3448	327	347
50	Anantashri Bodhayanteertha	21	3448	3469	347	368
51	Anantashri Shreedharteertha	19	3469	3488	368	387
52	Anantashri Narayanteertha	18	3488	3506	387	405
53	Anantashri Sadashivateertha	15	3506	3521	405	420
54	Anantashri Jayakrishna	13	3521	3534	420	433
55	Anantashri Virupaksha	11	3534	3545	433	444
56	Anantashri Vidyaranya	7	3545	3552	444	451
57	Anantashri Vishveshwarteertha	20	3552	3572	451	471
58	Anantashri Vivudheshwarteertha	23	3572	3595	471	494

59	Anantashri Maheshwarteertha	21	3595	3616	494	515
60	Anantashri Madhusoodan	19	3616	3635	515	534
61	Anantashri Raghuttama	15	3635	3650	534	549
62	Anantashri Ramachandrateertha	13	3650	3663	549	562
63	Anantashri Yogindra	11	3663	3674	562	573
64	Anantashri Maheshwarteertha	7	3674	3681	573	580
65	Anantashri Omkarateertha	27	3681	3708	580	607
66	Anantashri Narayanteertha	22	3708	3730	607	629
67	Anantashri Jagannathateertha	21	3730	3751	629	650
68	Anantashri Shridharteertha	19	3751	3770	650	669
69	Anantashri Ramachandrateertha	13	3770	3783	669	682
70	Anantashri Tamraksha	12	3783	3795	682	694
71	Anantashri Ugreshwarteertha	15	3795	3810	694	709
72	Anantashri Uddandateertha	18	3810	3828	709	727
73	Anantashri Sankarshateertha	22	3828	3850	727	749
74	Anantashri Janardana	21	3850	3871	749	770
75	Anantashri Akhandatmateertha	13	3871	3884	770	783
76	Anantashri Damodarteertha	12	3884	3896	783	795
77	Anantashri Shivanandateertha	15	3896	3911	795	810
78	Anantashri Gadadharateertha	18	3911	3929	810	828
79	Anantashri Vidyadharateertha	22	3929	3951	828	850
80	Anantashri Vamanteertha	21	3951	3972	850	871
81	Anantashri Shankarteertha	14	3972	3986	871	885
82	Anantashri Neelkanthateertha	11	3986	3997	885	896
83	Anantashri Ramakrishnateertha	20	3997	4017	896	916
84	Anantashri Raghuttamateertha	20	4017	4037	916	936
85	Anantashri Damodarteertha	10	4037	4047	936	946
86	Anantashri Gopal	13	4047	4060	946	959
87	Anantashri Mrityunjayteertha	21	4060	4081	959	980
88	Anantashri Govindateertha	22	4081	4103	980	1002
89	Anantashri Vasudevteertha	12	4103	4115	1002	1014
90	Anantashri Gangadharateertha	12	4115	4127	1014	1026
91	Anantashri Sadashivateertha	21	4127	4148	1026	1047
92	Anantashri Vamdevteertha	22	4148	4170	1047	1069
93	Anantashri Upamanyuteertha	15	4170	4185	1069	1084
94	Anantashri Hayagriva	16	4185	4201	1084	1100
95	Anantashri Hariteertha	18	4201	4219	1100	1118
96	Anantashri Raghuttamateertha	19	4219	4238	1118	1137
97	Anantashri Pundarikakshateertha	7	4238	4245	1137	1144
98	Anantashri Parashankarteertha	16	4245	4261	1144	1160
99	Anantashri Vedgarbhateertha	18	4261	4279	1160	1178
100	Anantashri Vedantabhaskarteertha	20	4279	4299	1178	1198
101	Anantashri Vigyanatma	20	4299	4319	1198	1218
102	Anantashri Shivanandateertha	21	4319	4340	1218	1239

103	Anantashri Maheshwarteertha	20	4340	4360	1239	1259
104	Anantashri Ramkrishnateertha	19	4360	4379	1259	1278
105	Anantashri Vrishabhadhwajateertha	14	4379	4393	1278	1292
106	Anantashri Shuddabodhateertha	13	4393	4406	1292	1305
107	Anantashri Someshwarteertha	20	4406	4426	1305	1325
108	Anantashri Vopdevateertha	21	4426	4447	1325	1346
109	Anantashri Shambhuteertha	20	4447	4467	1346	1366
110	Anantashri Bhriguteertha	13	4467	4480	1366	1379
111	Anantashri Keshavanandateertha	12	4480	4492	1379	1391
112	Anantashri Vidyananda	14	4492	4506	1391	1405
113	Anantashri Vedanandateertha	16	4506	4522	1405	1421
114	Anantashri Yoganandateertha	15	4522	4537	1421	1436
115	Anantashri Sutapanandateertha	24	4537	4561	1436	1460
116	Anantashri Shridharateertha	11	4561	4572	1460	1471
117	Anantashri Janardanateertha	21	4572	4593	1471	1492
118	Anantashri Kaamnashanandteertha	12	4593	4605	1492	1504
119	Anantashri Hariharanand	16	4605	4621	1504	1520
120	Anantashri Gopalteertha	15	4621	4636	1520	1535
121	Anantashri Krishnanandateertha	16	4636	4652	1535	1551
122	Anantashri Madhavanand	21	4652	4673	1551	1572
123	Anantashri Madhusudanteertha	13	4673	4686	1572	1585
124	Anantashri Govindateertha	16	4686	4702	1585	1601
125	Anantashri Raghuttamateertha	20	4702	4722	1601	1621
126	Anantashri Vamdevteertha	15	4722	4737	1621	1636
127	Anantashri Shikeshteertha	13	4737	4750	1636	1649
128	Anantashri Damodarateertha	25	4750	4775	1649	1674
129	Anantashri Gopalanandateertha	12	4775	4787	1674	1686
130	Anantashri Govindateertha	14	4787	4801	1686	1700
131	Anantashri Raghuttamateertha	19	4801	4820	1700	1719
132	Anantashri Ramchandrateertha	21	4820	4841	1719	1740
133	Anantashri Govindateertha	15	4841	4856	1740	1755
134	Anantashri Raghunathateertha	15	4856	4871	1755	1770
135	Anantashri Ramakrishnateertha	21	4871	4892	1770	1791
136	Anantashri Madhusudanteertha	13	4892	4905	1791	1804
137	Anantashri Damodarteertha	23	4905	4928	1804	1827
138	Anantashri Raghuttamateertha	22	4928	4950	1827	1849
139	Anantashri Shiv	21	4950	4971	1849	1870
140	Anantashri Loknath	13	4971	4984	1870	1883
141	Anantashri Damodarteertha	15	4984	4999	1883	1898
142	Anantashri Madhusudanteertha	27	4999	5027	1898	1925
143	Anantashri Bharatikrishnateertha	34	5027	5061	1925	1959
144	Anantashri Niranjanadevteertha	28	5065	5093	1964	1992
145	Anantashri Nishchalananda Saraswati		5093		1992	

THE ACHARYAS OF DWARIKA SHARDA PEETH (LINEAGE)

Pdf to OCR extracted from https://www.i2ocr.com/pdf-ocr-english

Source: Book - True History & Religion of India A Concise Encyclopaedia of Authentic Hinduism Swami Prakashananda Saraswati 2007_text

https://archive.org/details/truehistoryreligionofindiaaconciseencuclopediaofauthentichinduismswamiprakashana

Sr. No.	Name of Acharya	Period
1	Sureshwaracharya (490-477 BC) Brahm Swaroop (477-448 BC) (Agent of Sureshwaracharya) (Yudhishthir era 2949-2691)	490 - 448 BC
2	Chitsukhacharya	448 - 424 BC
3	Sarvgyanacharya	424 - 365 BC
4	Brahmanand Tirth	365 - 316 BC
5	Swaroopabhigyanacharya	316 - 249 BC
6	Mangalmoortyacharya	249 - 197 BC
7	Bhaskaracharya	197 - 174 BC
8	Pragyanacharya	174 - 131 BC
9	Brahrmjyotsanacharya	131 - 99 BC
10	Anandvirbhavacharya	99 - 34 BC
11	Kalanidhi Tirth	34 BC - 26 AD
12	Chidvilasacharya	26 - 62 AD
13	Vibhuttyanandacharya	62 - 97 AD
14	Sphoortinilaypad	97 - 146 AD
15	Vartantupad	146 - 192 AD
16	Yogarudhacharya	192 - 303 AD
17	Vigyandindimacharya	303 - 337 AD
18	Vidya Tirth	337 - 390 AD
19	Chichhaktideshik	390 - 426 AD
20	Vigyaneshwar Tirth	426 - 454 AD
21	Ritambhacharya	454 - 515 AD
22	Amreshwarguru	515 - 551 AD
23	Sarvmukh Tirth	551 - 612 AD
24	Swananddeshik	612 - 672 AD
25	Samar-rasik	672 - 742 AD
26	Narayan Ashram	742 - 779 AD
27	Vaikunth Ashram	779 - 828 AD
28	Trivikram Ashram	828 - 854 AD
29	Sashishekhar Ashram	854 - 903 AD
30	Trayambak Ashram	903 - 908 AD
31	Chidambara Ashram	908 - 944 AD
32	Keshav Ashram	944 - 1003 AD
33	Chidambara Ashram (2)	1003 - 1026 AD

34	Padmanabh Ashram	1026 - 1051 AD
35	Mahadev Ashram	1051 - 1091 AD
36	Sachchidanand Ashram	1091 - 1150 AD
37	Vidyashankar Ashram	1150 - 1208 AD
38	Abhinavsachchidanand Ashram	1208 - 1236 AD
39	Nrasingh Ashram	1236 - 1269 AD
40	Vasudev Ashram	1269 - 1304 AD
41	Purushottam Ashram	1304 - 1337 AD
42	Gyanardhan Ashram	1337 - 1351 AD
43	Harihar Ashram	1351 - 1354 AD
44	Bhavashram	1354 - 1364 AD
45	Brahm Ashram	1364 - 1379 AD
46	Vasnashram	1379 - 1399 AD
47	Sarvagyan Ashram	1396 - 1432 AD
48	Pradyuiin Ashram	1432 - 1438 AD
49	Govind Ashram	1438 - 1466 AD
50	Chidashram	1466 - 1519 AD
51	Vishveshwar Ashram	1519 - 1551 AD
53	Damodar Ashram	1551 - 1558 AD
54	Mahadev Ashram	1558 - 1559 AD
55	Aniruddha Ashram	1559 - 1568 AD
56	Achyut Ashram	1568 - 1572 AD
57	Madhav Ashram	1572 - 1628 AD
58	Anand Ashram	1628 - 1659 AD
59	Vishvaroop Asbram	1659 - 1664 AD
60	Chidghan Ashram	1664 - 1665 AD
61	Nrasingh Ashram	1665 - 1678 AD
62	Manohar Ashram	1678 - 1704 AD
63	Prakashanand Saraswati	1704 - 1738 AD
64	Vishuddhanand Ashram	1738 - 1741 AD
65	Vamanendra Ashram	1741 - 1774 AD
66	Keshav Ashram	1774 - 1781 AD
67	Madhusudan Ashram	1781 - 1791 AD
68	Haigreev Ashram	1791 - 1805 AD
69	Prakash Ashram	1805 - 1806 AD
70	Haigreev Saraswati	1806 - 1817 AD
71	Shridhar Ashram	1817 - 1857 AD
72	Damodar Ashram	1857 - 1872 AD
73	Keshav Ashram	1872 - 1878 AD
74	Rajrajeshwar Shankar Ashram.	1878 - 1901 AD
75	Shrimadhav Tirth	1901 - 1916 AD
76	Shrishantyanand	1916 - 1925 AD
77	Shrichandrashekhar Ashram	1925 - 1945 AD
78	Abhinavsachchidanand Tirth	1945 - 1982 AD
79	Swaroopanad Saraswati	1982 – 2022 AD
80	Sadananda Saraswati	2022 – (Present)

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THE ACHARYAS OF THE SHRI KANCHI KAMAKOTI PEETHAM (LINEAGE)

{In his last few years Adi Shankaracharya lived in Kanchi Kamkoti. When he left this earth planet in 477 BC, Sureshwaracharya became the first acharya of the Peethas. – Source: Page 509 of the book, True History and the Religion of India by Swami Prakashanand Saraswati.}

Source: https://www.kamakoti.org/souv/3-11.html

Sl No.	Name	Place of Birth	Place of Attainment of Samadhi	Year of Siddhi	Duration of Pontificate
1	Sri Sankara Bhagavatpada	Kaladi	Kanchi	477 – 407 B.C.	Founder and First Head of Kanchi Math
2	Sureswaracharya	Kashmir	Do	407 B.C.	70 years
3	Sarvajnatman	Tamrabarani	Do	364 B.C.	112 years
4	Satyabodha	Amaravathi Tira	Do	268 B.C.	63 years
5	Jnanananda	Mangalam near Lalgudi	Do	205 B.C.	63 Years
6	Suddhananda	Vedaranya	Do	124 B.C.	81 years
7	Anantananda	Chera country	Sri Saila	55 B.C.	69 Years
8	Kaivalyananda	Tirupati	Punyarasa Kanchi	28 A.D.	83 years
9	Krpa Sankara	Andhara Desa	Vindhya Mountains	69 A.D.	41 years
10	Sureswara	Mahabaleswar	Kanchi	127 A.D.	58 years
11	Sivananda Cidghana	Karnataka	Vriddhachala	172 A.D.	45 years
12	Chandrasekhara I	Near Palar	Seshachala	235 A.D.	63 years
13	Satchidghana	Near Gadilam	Kanchi	273 A.D.	37 years
14	Vidyaghana	Andhra Desa	Agastya Parvata	317 A.D.	45 years
15	Gangadhara I	Kanchi	Do	329 A.D.	12 years
16	Ujvala Sankara	Tapati Tira	Kashmir	367 A.D.	38 years
17	Sadasiva	Kashmir	Trayamabak	375 A.D.	8 years
18	Surendra	Maharashtra	Ujjain	385 A.D.	10 years
19	Vidyaghana	Maharashtra	Godavari Tira	398 A.D.	13 years
20	Muka Sankara	(?)	Godavari	437 A.D.	35 years
21	Chandrasekhara ii	Konkan	Kasi	447 A.D.	10 years
22	Bodhendra I	Ratangiri	Jagannatha	481 A.D.	34 years
23	Satchitsukha	Srikakulam	Do	512 A.D.	31 years
24	Chitsukha I	Konan	Ratangiri	527 A.D.	15 years
25	Satichidanandaghana	Srimushnam	Gokarna	548 A.D.	21 years
26	Prajnanaghana	Pinakini river side	Kanchi	564 A.D.	16 years
27	Chidvilasa	Hastigiri	Kanchi	577 A.D.	13 years
28	Mahadeva I	Mithila	Do	601 A.D.	24 years
29	Purnabodha I	Andhra Desa	Do	618 A.D.	17 years
30	Bodhendra Ii	Do	Do	655 A.D.	37 years
31	Chidanandaghana	Andhra Desa	Do	672 A.D.	4 years
33	Satchidananda	Do	Do	692 A.D.	20 years

34	Chandrasekhara III	Vegavati side	Do	710 A.D.	18 years
35	Chitsukha II	Vedachala	Sahaya Mountains	737 A.D.	27 years
36	Chitsukhananda Palar side	...	Kanchi	758 A.D.	21 years
37	Vidyaghana	Not Known	Chidambaram	788 A.D.	21 years
38	Abhinava Sankara	Chidambaram, Himalayas	Dattatreya cave,	840 A.D.	30 years
39	Satchidvilasa	Maharashtra	Kanchi	873 A.D.	32 years
40	Mahadeva II	Karnataka	Do	915 A.D.	33 Years
41	Gangadhara II	Bhima river side	Do	950 A.D.	42 years
42	Brahamanandaghana	Karnataka	Do	978 A.D.	35 years
43	Anandaghana	Tungabhadra	Do	1014 A.D.	28 years
44	Purnabodha I	Karnataka	Do	1040 A.D.	36 years
45	Paramasiva I	Do	Do	1061 A.D.	26 years
46	Sandranandabodha	Do	Arunachala	1098 A.D.	21 years
47	Chandrasekhara IV	Kundi river side	Do	1166 A.D.	37 years
48	Advaitanandaboodha	Pinakini	Chidambaram	1200 A.D.	68 years
49	Mahadeva III	Chayavanam	Gadilam	1247 A.D.	34 years
50	Chandrachuda I	Not Known	Do	1297 A.D.	47 years
51	Vidyatirtha	Bilvaranya	Himalayas	1385 A.D.	50 years
52	Sankarananda	Madhyarjuna	Kanchi	1417 A.D.	88 years
53	Purnananda Sadasiva	Nagarayana	Do	1498 A.D.	32 years
54	Vyasachala Mahadeva	Kanchi	Vyasachala	1507 A.D.	81 years
55	Chandrachuda II	Asmala	Kanchi	1524 A.D.	9 years
56	Sarvajna Sadasivabodha	Pennar side	Rameswaram	1539 A.D.	17 years
57	Paramasiva II	Pampatira	Svetarayana	1586 A.D.	15 years
58	Atmabodha	Vridhachalam	Gadilam	1638 A.D.	47 years
59	Bhagavannama Bodhendra	Kanchi	Govindapuram	1692 A.D.	52 years
60	Adhvaitatma Prakasa	Vasista river side	Ambi	1704 A.D.	54 years
61	Mahadeva IV	Not known	Tiruvottriyur	1746 A.D.	12 years
62	Chandrasekhara V	Not known	Do	1783	31 years
63	Mahadeva	Kumbakonam	Kumbakonam	1814	
64	Chandrasekhara	Not known	Kumbakonam	1851 A.D.	
65	Mahadeva (Sudarsana)	Madhyarjuna	Elaiyattankudi	1891 A.D.	37 years
66	Chandrasekhara VI	Udayambakkam	Kalavai	1908 A.D.	40 years
67	Mahadeva VI	Tiruvisanallur	Do	1908 A.D.	7 days

68	Chandrasekharendra Saraswathi Maha Svamigal VII	Villupuram	Kanchi	1994 A.D.	86 years
69	Jayendra Saraswathi Svamigal	Irulneeki	Kanchi	2018	24 years
70	Sankara Vijayendra Sarasvathi Svamigal	Thandalam	-	Present	...

Other similar Mathas adhering to Adi SankarAchArya jI's Advaita

[Updated on 05-Dec-2022]

Gaudpadacharya Kavale (Goa) Math - H.H. Shreemad Shivanand Saraswati (77th head of Gaud Saraswat Brahmin Samaj of Goa and South Indian Saraswat Brahmins)

Kavale Math - Marathi - कवळे मठ named from 'Kaivalya Math'

Source:
[1] https://rssmumbai.org/kavale_math.php
[2] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gaudapadacharya_Math
[3] http://www.gsbkonkani.net/Maths/SHRI%20SAMSTHAN%20GOWDAPADACHARYA%20KAIVALYA%20MATH.htm
[4] https://www.kamakoti.org/kamakoti/articles/Preceptors%20of%20Advaita%20-%2061.html
[5] https://www.advaita-vedanta.org/series/as/AS_verse_17.htm

The Shri Gaudapadacharya matha follows a 'Guru-Sishya' system in which head of the Matha appoints a shishya, who succeeds the guru. A shishya is selected at very young age. The existing head of the Math decides upon a worthy disciple, initiates him as a sannyāsin, and appoints him as the head.

The available details of Guru-Shishya parampara of Shri Saunstan Gaudapadacharya matha is as given below.[29][30]

- 1. Shri Gauḍapādāchārya
- 2. Shri Govinda Bhagavatpadacharya
- **3. Shrimat Vivarananda Saraswati Swami Gauḍapādāchārya** & Shri Adi Shankaracharya
- 4. Shrimat Adinath Paramashivananda Saraswati Swami Gauḍapādāchārya
- 5. Shrimat Sadashiva Paramashivananda Saraswati Swami Gauḍapādāchārya
- 6. Shrimat Ishwara Paramashivananda Saraswati Swami Gauḍapādāchārya
- 7. Shrimat Rudra Pramashivananda Saraswati Swami Gauḍapādāchārya
- 8. Shrimat Vishnu Paramashivananda Saraswati Swami Gauḍapādāchārya
- 9. Shrimat Brahma Paramashivananda Saraswati Swami Gauḍapādāchārya
- 10. Shrimat Sanaka Mahashivananda Saraswati Swami Gauḍapādāchārya
- 11. Shrimat Sadananda Mahashivananda Saraswati Swami Gauḍapādāchārya
- 12. Shrimat Sanatana Mahashivananda Saraswati Swami Gauḍapādāchārya

- 13. Shrimat SanatKumara Mahashivananda Saraswati Swami Gauḍapādāchārya
- 14. Shrimat Sarika Sujata Mahashivananda Saraswati Swami Gauḍapādāchārya
- 15. Shrimat Rhibhushita Mahashivananda Saraswati Swami Gauḍapādāchārya
- 16. Shrimat Dattatreya Mahashivananda Saraswati Swami Gauḍapādāchārya
- 17. Shrimat Raivata Mahashivananda Saraswati Swami Gauḍapādāchārya
- 18. Shrimat Vamadeva Mahashivananda Saraswati Swami Gauḍapādāchārya
- 19. Shrimat Vyasa Mahashivananda Saraswati Swami Gauḍapādāchārya
- 20. Shrimat Shuka Mahashivananda Saraswati Swami Gauḍapādāchārya
- 21. Shrimat Nrisimha sadashivananda Saraswati Swami Gauḍapādāchārya
- 22. Shrimat Mahesha Sadashivananda Saraswati Swami Gauḍapādāchārya
- 23. Shrimat Bhaskara Sadashivananda Saraswati Swami Gauḍapādāchārya
- 24. Shrimat Mahendra Sadashivananda Saraswati Swami Gauḍapādāchārya
- 25. Shrimat Vishnu Sadashivananda Saraswati Swami Gauḍapādāchārya
- 26. Shrimat Madhava Sadashivananda Saraswati Swami Gauḍapādāchārya
- 27. Shrimat Mahesh Sadashivananda Saraswati Swami Gauḍapādāchārya
- 28. Shrimat Advaitha Sadashivananda Saraswati Swami Gauḍapādāchārya
- 29. Shrimat Paramatmananda Sadashivananda Saraswati Swami Gauḍapādāchārya
- 30. Shrimat Siddayogeshwarananda Sadashivananda Saraswati Swami Gauḍapādāchārya
- 31. Shrimat KAivalyananda Sadashivananda Saraswati Swami Gauḍapādāchārya
- 32. Shrimat Amritananda Sadashivananda Saraswati Swami Gauḍapādāchārya
- 33. Shrimat Hansananda Sadashivananda Saraswati Swami Gauḍapādāchārya
- 34. Shrimat Brahmananda Sadashivananda Saraswati Swami Gauḍapādāchārya
- 35. Shrimat Vimalananda Sadashivananda Saraswati Swami Gauḍapādāchārya
- 36. Shrimat Sachidananda Sadashivananda Saraswati Swami Gauḍapādāchārya
- 37. Shrimat Vimalananda Sadashivananda Saraswati Swami Gauḍapādāchārya
- **38. Shrimat Ramamnda Sadashvananda Saraswati Swami Gauḍapādāchārya**
- **57. Shrimat Poornananda Saraswati Saraswati Swami Gauḍapādāchārya**
- 58. Shrimat Sahajananda Saraswati Saraswati Swami Gauḍapādāchārya
- 59. Shrimat Vidyananda Saraswati Saraswati Swami Gauḍapādāchārya
- 60. Shrimat Ramananda Saraswati Saraswati Swami Gauḍapādāchārya
- 61. Shrimat Sadananda Saraswati Saraswati Swami Gauḍapādāchārya
- 62. Shrimat Bhavananda Saraswati Saraswati Swami Gauḍapādāchārya
- 63. Shrimat Sachidananda Saraswati Saraswati Swami Gauḍapādāchārya
- 64. Shrimat Shivananda Saraswati Swami Gauḍapādāchārya & Shrimat Atmananda Saraswati Swami Gauḍapādāchārya
- 65. Shrimat Ramananda Saraswati Swami Gauḍapādāchārya
- 66. Shrimat Jyotirananda Saraswati Swami Gauḍapādāchārya, Shrimat Lilananda Saraswati Swami Gauḍapādāchārya, Shrimat Sadananda Saraswati Swami Gauḍapādāchārya & Shrimat Poornanada Saraswati Swami Gauḍapādāchārya
- 67. Shrimat Ramananda Saraswati Swami Gauḍapādāchārya
- 68. Shrimat Shivananda Saraswati Swami Gauḍapādāchārya
- 69. Shrimat Atmananda Saraswati Swami Gauḍapādāchārya
- 70. Shrimat Poornananda Saraswati Swami Gauḍapādāchārya
- 71. Shrimat Ramananda Saraswati Swami Gauḍapādāchārya
- 72. Shrimat Shivananda Saraswati Swami Gauḍapādāchārya
- 73. Shrimat Atmananda Saraswati Swami Gauḍapādāchārya
- 74. Shrimat Poornananda Saraswati Swami Gauḍapādāchārya
- 75. Shrimat Ramananda Saraswati Swami Gauḍapādāchārya
- 76. Shrimat Sachidananda Saraswati Swami Gauḍapādāchārya
- 77. Shrimat Shivananda Saraswati Swami Gauḍapādāchārya [*Present Pontiff*]

- ***There are no records available about the swamiji's from serial number 39 to 56. The records were destroyed by the Portuguese government during their rule in Goa.***
- ***The dates of being the head as GauDapadAchArya-s are also not available. Hence this cannot be considered as authentic.***
- ***prakASatmAn is also known as vivaraNAchArya. parmapadAchArya has written a sub-commentary on Brahmasutra bhASya of Adi Sankara by the name 'panchapAdikA'. prakASatmAn has written a vivaraNa on panchapAdikA.***

Adding the list as it might get deleted. Soon will add the list of lineage of all five Shankara mathas

Chitrapur Math (split from Gaudapadacharya math) has several branches. Est. in 1708 Parama Pūjya Shrīmat Parijñānāshram Swāmījī I (1708-1720)

Source:
[1] https://chitrapurmath.net/site/about-parampara

Fake SankarAchAryas

[Added on 08-Dec-2022]

There are many Fake SankarAchArya-s who falsely add the honorific title of SankarAchArya to their name but have no connection with the four authentic Sankara Matha-s the amnaya peetham.

They may or may not follow the Sankara Matha-s system.

Mahant Narendra Giri ji Maharaj, the then head of Akhil Bhartiya Akhada paridhad as on 01-May-2017 (अखिल भारतीय अखाड़ा परिषद) has said in an interview to a new channel 'News State, Uttar Pradesh' that there are more than 84 saints / thugs disguised as SankarAchArya-s. (Source: jump to 1.19 for precise statement, YouTube video dt 01-May-2017, 5 years ago as on 08-Dec-2022).

Fake SankarAchAryas - Dangerous to our Dharma and real SankarAchArya-s

[Added on 08-Dec-2022]

This website is purely acedamic, and it is not right to talk about politics, but our honourable SankarAchArya-s are not immune to the politics and often become target by vested interest groups. Hence this section is presented. It has to be taken in right spirit and one has to understand the seriousness of situation. In the very land of bhArata, our own

topmost Dharma Guru-s are not safe and are often targetted for their orthodox vedic position on social and dharmic matters. At best political parties can ignore them, but targetting them smells national and / or international conspiracies. Earlier to such conspiracies were created. Please refer to the Section Part III - Conspiracies against Sanatan Dharma by East India Co, Max Muller, Wilson, Jones and others

There are many Fake SankarAchArya-s who falsely add the honorific title of SankarAchArya to their name but have no connection with the four authentic Sankara Matha-s the amnaya peetham. We can add Kanchi Matha SankarAchArya as the fifth, but not any other math or name. All other Matha-s and their heads who claim to be SankarAchArya are fake.

These fake SankarAchArya-s may or may not follow the Sankara Matha-s system or adhere to its core philosophy.

Mahant Narendra Giri ji Maharaj, the then head of Akhil Bhartiya Akhada paridhad as on 01-May-2017 (अखिल भारतीय अखाड़ा परिषद) has said in an interview to a new channel 'News State, Uttar Pradesh' that there are more than 84 saints / thugs disguised as SankarAchArya-s. (Source: jump to 1.19 for precise statement, YouTube video dt 01-May-2017, 5 years ago as on 08-Dec-2022).

Some Fake SankarAchArya-s -

1. Swami Adhokshjanand Devirath - Claims to be SankarAchArya of Puri
2. Lakshmi SankarAchArya - Promotes Islam appreciates Zakir Naik.

While they enjoy political patriotism, the real SankarAchArya-s like Puri SankarAchArya and Kanchi SankarAchArya Swami Jayendra SarasvatI are tortured.

Attempts to attack Swami Nishchalananda SarasvatI of Puri Math

Plans to defame and attack Swami Nishchalananda ji Maharaj, SanchArAchArya of Govadrhan Matha, Jagannath Puri (popularly known as Puri SankarAchArya). He is supported by all Political parties including BJP.

Please watch the video series in three parts : Fake Shankracharya (must watch) Part 1 | 2 | 3

Puri: फर्जी और नकली Shankaracharya का विरोध, संगठनों ने की ढोंगी संत के खिलाफ कार्रवाई की मांग - resistance was lead by Aditya Vahini, a social wing of Jagannath Puri Matha

Attack on Kanchi SankarAchArya Swami Jayendra SarasvatI

Swami Jayendra SarasvatI was accused of robbery and murder and made great headlines in news channels in 2004. After many years, he was acquitted. However even though

being the head of recognised Matha having illustrious Lineage of great Saints, at the ripe age of 70 years, he was made to sit on a small table for 4-5 hours for interrogation. He was not allowed to carry on his daily dharmic duties as the head of Matha. Finally he was acquitted after nearly 10 years of harresment by law enforcement agencies on 27-Nov-2013.

Source: Sankararaman murder case: Jayendra Saraswathi, 22 others acquitted

svAmI jayendra sarasvatI is said to be active in social welfare of the Hindus.

Both SankarAchArya-s do not adhere to any political party nor do they favour any one of them. Hence Fake SankarAchArya-s are created to counter them and carry on the political agenda.

|| Hari OM ||

Part V

Works of Adi Sankara

QUESTIONING AUTHENTICITY OF WORKS ATTRIBUTED TO ADI SANKARA

Updated: 20th September 2015

[Beta-2]

Not all works attributed to Adi Sankara are considered as actually composed by him by western scholars. This assumptions has also lead to discarding many Upanishads as fake or later Upanishads. There are many reasons for this reasons. Let us understand them. We will also present a list of Upanishads and Gitas that we consider them as authentic.

Are all the works attributed to Adi Sankara bhagavadpAda actually his compositions?

There are over 400 different works attributed to Adi Sankara. Many eastern and western scholars have raised their concerns about the works which are attributed to Adi Sankara are actually composed by the great acharya. There are several reasons for these assumptions. Hymns, stotras, stutis, etc are not voluminous works. Westerners may not have any hidden motives, but researchers, by nature, are extrovert unless they are Self Realized. An extrovert person who believes in logical reasoning cannot imagine something that their mind cannot comprehend, nor they can accept things that do not seem to be practically possible, comparing their ability and the extraordinary effort and time needed to compose those hymns. Genuine enquiry is welcome.

It is not in my capacity to find the truth behind the authenticity of works attributed to Adi Shankara. This page is created to know the reasons behind such doubts, so that at least we can understand the basis on which the doubt is created. Attempts are made to give simple logical explanation in support of works attributed to our AchArya Adi Sankara bhagavadpAda.

Critical analysis of Adi Sankara's authorship over vast works attributed to him can be broadly classified into two reasons

1. A person cannot change writing style and thinking pattern (this includes the main philosophy taught by him as he cannot change his basic philosophy, which has become a part of his life itself).

2. In short life span, a person cannot compose around 400 hymns, stotra-s, independent grantha-s and commentaries. Hence later AchArya-s who hold the title of SankarAcArya must have composed them.

We will try to understand these objections and give possible answers.

Let us now try to understand what methods are used to determine authenticity of attribution of works attributed to Adi Shankara Bhagavadpada

Methods of evaluation for determining authenticity

There are certain parameters and rules according to which works are tested. There are three types of works

- Commentaries / Sub-commentaries
- Independent hymns, stuti-s and stotra-s, which includes those related to his biography.
- prakaraNa grantha-s

Methods of evaluation mostly include

- Colophon (Introduction to a chapter e.g. intro of different chapters in Gita BhASya)
- Writing style, Chanda, Meter, Terminology, Grammar, etc used
- Sub-commentaries by famous successors of Advaita tradition citing reference of his works. E.g. Siddhanta bindu is a commentary by Madhusudan Sarasvati on dasasloki, manasollasa is commentary by sureSvarAcArya on daxINAmUrty stotra
- Historical facts relating to incidents in his life as mentioned in Adi shankara's biographies like Sankshepa Madhaviya Digvijay or Ananadgiri's PrAcina-Sankara-vijaya

Major works are of westerners who just think logically without meditating and so they do not get proper insight. Some critics have biased mind. Natalia Isayeva's work is published in a book titled 'Shankara and Indian Philosophy' (found here, refer pg 101 [1]), Reading 5-10 pages gives you an idea on the way of analysis. On page 101 (110 in pdf file), she mentions three types of debates, vAda, jalpa and vitaNDa. She declares that it is vitaNDa that appears to have been particularly prevailed in advaita polemics. One can understand the mindset of these type of critics. For the sake of understanding, let us under what these three words mean, as explained by Kanchi Paramacharya. *(sanskrit words are not spelled as per transliteration)*

*The word "**vada**" itself is nowadays wrongly taken to mean stubbornly maintaining that one's view is right. As a matter of fact it truly means finding out the truth by weighing one's view against one's opponent's. It was in this manner that Sankara held debates with scholars like Mandanamisra and it was only after listening to the other man's point of view that he arrived at non-dualism as the ultimate Truth. **Vada** means an exchange of thoughts, not a refusal to see the other man's point of view. To maintain that one's view of a subject is the right one without taking into account the opinion of others is "**jalpa**",*

*not vada. There is a third attitude. It is to have no point of view of one's own and being just contrary: it is called "**vitanda**". Source & Credits*

[1] Update: Link updated, file mentioned in earlier link was deleted by scribd.

A copy of Book is attached at the bottom of this page.

We would like to make a note that not all western indologists, Orientalists and fact finders try to malign Hinduism. There were and are good westerners who dedicated their life in understanding Hinduism and projected our dharma in a positive way. One such name is Arthur Avalon (Sir John Woodroof) who defended tantra-s. He was not just an analyst but a tantrika practitioner who studied tantra-s and practised under guidance of able guru-s. Another name is Professor John Grimes. He defended advaita and the authorship of Vivekchudamani which is questioned by many critics. We must give credits to them too.

From example of Natalia Isayeva (and Wendy Doniger), we can understand that not all authors are neutral in their approach. In past, systematic planned attempts were made to denigrate our dharma.

Conspiracies by East India Company, Asiatic Society and Max Muller

<content shifted to Conspiracies by East India Co, Max Muller, Wilson, Jones and others>

To add fuel to fire, questioning authenticity of works attributed to Adi Sankara were first questioned by westerners and they took the lead in critical study. This sparked the fire within Indian scholars and rival sampradAya-s too exploited claims made by western scholars.

Lets continue our analysis of Authentic works of Adi Sankara.

Brahma Sutra BhASya as de-facto Standard for comparing works

The de-facto standard adopted by westerners is to compare works with that on commentary based on Brahma sutra, which they conclude is undoubtedly authentic work of Adi Sankara. If any work appears contradictory to Brahma Sutra bhasya by any means, then it is rejected as unauthentic. Sadly, since the work attributed by Adi Shankara is claimed to be of dubious authority, the entire work, it's philosophy, underlined principle and it’s content are rejected. Apart from Adi Shankara there are many

works by later acharyas which are very useful in understanding advaita like Naiskarmya Siddhi of Sureshwaracharya, Panchadasi and Jivan Mukti Viveka of Vidyaranya Swami.

brahma sutra, the topmost canonical text

It is a fact that brahma sUtra is a top level text for a vedAntin. It is studied last after mastering gItA and upanishads. After one has contemplated on upanishads and meditated the advaita way, still if there is any confusion e.g. s/he may find virodhAbhAsa i.e. contradictory statements in different upanishads say, one upanishad is saying something and another is contradicting the earlier upanishad, then such confusion gets cleared by contemplating on brahma sUtra-s under the guidance of a guru. AchArya who is well versed in brahma sUtra, and is capable of clearing doubts in our shAstra-s is considered as an authority. Such great AchArya-s are very few. Not all can write commentary on brahma sUtra. Anyone can question commentary of AchArya and AchArya must be able to defend his/her views. If AchArya fails to do so, his commentary is discarded and s/he loses all honorific titles like 108, 1008, mahAmaNDaleSvara, etc. During Adi Sankara's days, if s/he gets defeated in debate, then he must accept the views of rival AchArya and must become his disciple.

A great example is the debate between maNDana mishra and Adi Sankara mentioned elaborately in sarga 8 of ShrI Sankara digvijaya of mAdhava vidyAraNya svAmI (S.D.V.). Debates may take hostile turn, but this was not the case with Adi Sankara. In this debate, a female, ubhaya bhArati, wife of maNDana mishra, was chosen as a referee. She asked both Adi Sankara and maNDana mishra to wear fresh garlands and then begin the debate, and said that the one whose garland loses its freshness would be declared as the loser! (S.D.V. 8.68) Why? Because if one gets angry, the body will develop heat, and, as a result, the flower garland will lose their freshness in that heat. Anger within is a sign of defeat.

Commentary of vedAnta sutra (brahma sUtra) is of different genre, targeted to different audience, precisely to very advanced sAdhaka-s who are well versed in tradition and are sufficiently inwardly pure with strong vairAGYa and mumukshutva. All four primary qualities - viveka, vairAGYa, SaTasampatti, mumukshtva are cultivated in their hearts to a great extend. They are uttama adhikAri-s (the best amongst sAdhaka-s). Adi Sankara didn't asked laymen or a pandit to write sub-commentary on vedAnta sUtra.

An Interesting Story ...

There is an interesting story behind composing sub-commentary in sarga 13. The first offer to write sub-commentary made to sureshvarAchArya (maNDana mishra) (S.D.V. 13.3). Adi Sankara considered sureshvara to be sufficiently inwardly pure to write the sub-commentary (vArtika) on his commentary on brahma sUtra bhAshya.**[1]**

Other disciples objected saying that since sureshvara was a mimAmsaka, a hardcore ritualist in this pre-monastic life, he might not do justice in further explaining Adi Sankara's

commentary, as advaita is based on renunciation of action. They further argued that unlike padmapAda who had surrendered himself at your lotus feet and as a result of thy grace his ignorance was removed is the best suited. padmapAda recomended hastAmalaka, as he was a GYAnI. hastAmalaka recommended padmapAda. Disciples said that they didnt have any jealousy for anyone, but sureshvarAcArya had taken sanyAsa because he was defeated in shAShtrArtha (debate), but he might not have surrendered your heart to you.

AchArya Sankara peacefully replied that it is true that hastAmala is a great GYAnI, but he stays only in Atma-sthiti, the supreme non-dual state of Self-Realisation. It is not possible to write anything in this state.

To avoid further conflict, sureshvarAchArya surrendered AchArya-s commentary back to AchArya. AchArya then asked padmapAda to write sub-commentary, but not vArtika. But this doubt was needed to be uprooted. Hence AchArya asked sureshvara to write an independent grantha of advaita nature. Soon sureshvara, composed 'naishkarmya siddhi' and surrendered it at the lotus feet of his guru. This text was accepted by all and with this acceptance, doubts about sureshvara's true understanding of advaita faded away.

Importance of vArtika

There are many types of sub-commentaries. Their job is to further clarify and explain the commentary. None can contradict the main commentary written by Adi Sankara. If it happens, views explained in sub-commentary on that verse is rejected as Adi Sankara is the supreme authority and his opinion are considered as final. In this unique tradition, the only sub-commentary that can contradict the main commentator is 'vArtika'. Hence vArtika is highly revered can be critical of the views of original commentator. sureshvarAvArya is the only vArtikakAra amongst AchArya's disciples. He alone enjoys this status and is reverentially called as 'vArtikakAra'. Surely the advaitins were not vitaNDavAdin-s (those adopting vitaNDa way of debate)

Debate (vAda), a medium to clear doubts

In S.D.V. it is said that sureshvara while debating with Sankara bhagavadpAda realised the truth and with heart he accepted sanyAsa and GYAna mArga. For sureshvara, debate was a medium to clear doubts.

[1] ***Note:*** In a sanskrit movie based on biography of Sankara bhagavadpAda, following incident is shown. The author could not find this incident in S.D.V. It must be taken from other biographies. Since Joshi Math, Kanchi Math and other SankarAchAryas have seen this movie and authenticated it, this incident must be true. As per the movie, Adi Sankara wished sureshvara to write a commentary. This was done when sureshvara one day observed some brAhmins performing animal sacrifice. Out of compassion, they had replaced animal meat with wheat flour. sureshvara witnessed one such yaGYa being performed. He realized that even replacing meat with floor didn't purify the mind. Be it animal or wheat floor, the intention of killing doesn't change. Hence the purpose is not fulfilled by substituting meat with floor. He discussed this with Adi Sankara. Adi Sankara happily concluded that now the sanyAsa is cultivated within you. sanyAsa is a 'state of mind' and 'not a way of living'.

vArtikAkAra, a shining example of transformation

Life of our vArtikakAra is a shining example that as one matures spiritually, thinking pattern changes. The reason for this change is opening and expanding 'inner eye (of wisdom)'. As mind is purified, inner reflections change. With inner realization, the perception changes and so does the attitude, the way of living.

A hardcore, celebrated mimAmsaka (ritualist), accepted sanyAsa as he was strong and pure enough to accept the truth behind our AchArya's logical words which were in-turn backed by the power of direct experience and guru's and Ishvara's blessings. The new life was completely opposite to that he earlier lived. But the opening of inner eye made this change possible. Second change was the incident of animal sacrifice.

madhususan sarasvatI, a unique example of transformation

madhusudan sarasvatI (MS) is a unique examples of transformation of heart. MS was an adept in dvaita, navya-nyAya and was highly influenced by Sri chaitanya mahAprabhu. He wanted to refute advaita. In order to acheive his goal, MS learned advaita under Sringeri SankarachArya. But as he learned it, not only his doubts cleared but he realised that it is the advaita siddhAnta that is the ultimate reality. As a repentance to his act (of learning advaita with the intention to later refute it), MS took sanyAsa as a eka DAnDI sanyAsI. Soon MS became a celebrated name in dvaita-advaita polemics. MS defended advaita and made it thorn-free. He defended works of other pUrvAchArya-s too. Yet MS remained devoted to his ISTa-devatA bhagavAn krShNa. MS in his gItA commentary chapter 6 has quoted patanjalI yoga sUtra-s along with vyAsa bhAshya. His gItA commentary also has bhakti in it. In this way, MS is a unique example of transformation.

Difference between brahma sUtra and prakaraNa grantha-s

Coming back, commentary on brahma sUtra is for advanced sAdhaka-s and not for masses. On the other hand, prakaraNa grantha-s are for beginners hence they are written in different genre, in a simple way. Unlike commentary on brahma sUtra, the AchArya while composing a prakaraNa grantha does not take it for granted that the reader is well-versed in the tradition and is sufficiently inwardly pure to understand the inner meaning. AchArya composes prakaraNa grantha-s for beginners. prakaraNa grantha-s explain basic concepts of vedAnta. Hence it is not difficult to understand that the author adopts a different writing style.

Composing hymns ...

When it comes to hymns and composing poetry, the poet can change his style of writing. Soaked in ecstasy, with heart overflowing with devotion and tears flowing from eyes and rolling on the cheeks, a poet saint in transcendental bliss, can compose hymns saturated with devotion and glory of the almighty. Ishvara puts such high-souled devotees in a blissful divine state. Ishvara himself gives inspiration and words to compose. Such hymns have the strength to spread far and wide, and touch hearts of all those who come under it's influence. Such hymns stir heart & soul, instilling devotion in all.

How can one person have equal reverence for more than one form of God?

While it is true that a devotee can be in transcendental bliss and can sing glories of his chosen deity, question arises how can a devotee who has surrendered his heart and soul to rAma may compose hymns to Siva or even to krShNa?

Lets try to understand why a devotee generally do not compose hymns on deities other than his/her ISTa devatA.

A script writer, depending upon his intellectual ability, can shift gears and can write plays, drama and movie scripts which are completely different than the author's previous writings. In case of spirituality, it is not only intellect, but intense intimacy and spiritual bonding experienced by a devotee for his chosen personal deity and also for the philosophy that s/he follows. Hence when one has poured heart and soul in worship of his/her chosen deity, it is difficult to imagine that another form of God is equally supreme as that of his/her chosen God. Even if by God's grace one does not try to prove superiority of his/her chosen deity and siddhAnta, still s/he will find it difficult to eulogize another deity as supreme brahman due to intense meditation focused on chosen deity that too following a particular methodology.

This doubt is very genuine and needs to be addressed. It is practically possible in select few to compose hymns to more than one deity. The answer is their spiritual maturity and God's grace.

As one progresses spiritually, negative emotions fade away. There is no hatred for other forms of God, hence there is no attempt to denigrate their status. Other deities are absent for them. It is just pure devotion to one form of God. As one progresses, devotion increases. Devotion is a quality. A Siva bhakta has same intensity of devotion for Siva that a rAma bhakta has for rAma. Upon reaching certain maturity, if a rAma or a krShNa bhakta listens to Siva bhajan-s his heart will be filled with devotion. This happens spontaneously all by the grace of God. A devotee need not do anything by himself. His life is controlled by Ishvara. Ishvara himself cultivates devotion for other deities. **A rAma bhakta may not need to worship or practice japa of Siva in order to instil devotion in his heart.** Hence for a select few blessed souls, Ishvara attracts their hearts for more than one form of God. When their heart is completely filled with devotion of rAma, they compose hymns dedicated to rAma. The same Ishvara then instils devotion for Siva in his heart. Now, the heart is completely filled with devotion to Siva. A devotee will spontaneously create hymns for Siva.

Composition of hymns can also be verified from historical records, local legends and from various biographies.

Works verified based on historical facts…

Some works can be verified on historic facts connected to his various biographies. Sometimes, even biographies are accused of being corrupted. It may be true that some biographies written by later acharyas are corrupted, but Madhaviya Shankara Digvijaya is

considered as the most authentic extant biography on Adi Shankara. Even if we take into account some interpolations here and there, not everything written about Adi Shankara is wrong. Even if one incident like composing hymn 'kanakadhArA stotra' on Goddess Laxmi, it opens new doors to AchArya-s philosophy.

Kanchi Paramacharya has confirmed composition of various hymns by relating Adi Sankara's biography with historical facts.

Paramacharya says, "We find it here upon historical fact the creation of "Sivapadadi-kesanta stotram" and "Sivakesadi-padanta stotram" and Saundarya lahiri"

Paramacharya further says,

"Sankara's yatra to Kailasa, the abode of Lord Siva, is one of the most notable events in the history of the Acharya. During the course of his peregrination in the Himalayan region, Sankaracharya desired to have darshan of Sri Paramesvara having his abode in Kailas. Sankara managed to reach Kailas quickly because of His yogic power. He had darshan of Lord Paramesvara and Devi Parvati. According to tradition, Sankara adored Paramesvara by singing two hymns, known as "Sivapadadi-kesanta stotram" and "Sivakesadi-padanta stotram". Immensely pleased with Sankara's prayers, Paramesvara blessed Sankara, presented him with five sphatika (crystal) lingas and instructed him to arrange for the worship of the lingas for the sake of the welfare of the universe, indicating also the mode of worship. ***Paramesvara also handed over to Sankara the palm-leaf manuscript of Soundarya Lahari,*** *which is noted as Siva's own hymn in praise of the Parasakti.*

From available biographical information, it is learnt that Sankaracharya placed one of the five sphatika lingas got at Kailas and kept the Yoga Linga for his own personal worship and that of his successors at Kanchi.

Bhagavatpada Sankara got Kanchi city remodeled and also caused the reconstruction of the three principal temples of Kanchi, viz., the temples of ***Sri Ekamranatha*** *(a form of Shiva),* ***Devi Kamakshi*** *(Sri Yantra / Shakta) / Mantra Sadhana ==> tantra) and* ***Sri Varadaraja*** *(a form of vishnu) with the assistance of Rajasena, ruler of Kanchi. Sankara consecrated the Srichakra before Devi Kamakshi and thereby secured Her bounteous grace for devotees having Her darshan."*

We have already understood that a author can adopt different writing style. We will now try to understand more about it.

Explanation for different writing style than Brahma Sutra BhASya

While genuine enquiry is welcome, the intention behind every enquiry is not always noble. Sometimes, it is the lack of intellectual understanding by scholars, as none could be compared to Adi Sankara in any terms - authority, grammar, compositions or writing style, as Adi Sankara had mastered many arts, Vedas, 14 adobes of knowledge, chandas, meter,

etc. Vivekchudamani has more than one chand. Before Ech sloka has a dedicated Chanda in which it is supposed to be sung is mentioned.

From his biography, we know that Adi Sankara mastered all arts. To interpret different shastras like Mimamsa and Nyaya, one has to think from one level. While practicing Mantra Yog, one has to adapt different philosophy. While interpreting Advaita and Ajata Vada, one has to rise to that level and talk from that standpoint.

'Reject' and 'neglect'

Many who have read advaita suferficially have the understanding that advaita rejects everything as 'mithyA'. However, this assumption is not true. Advaitains do not reject anything, it 'neglects' everything.

***Kanchi Paramacharya says**,*

"Advaita or non-dualism is in agreement with Mimamsa up to a point. It accepts Vedic karma as well as the six pramanas (perceptions or sources of knowledge) defined by Kumarilabhatta. Sankara's non-dualism, Ramanuja's qualified non-dualism, and Madhva's dualism are all Vedantic doctrines and all three are not against Vedic rituals. While non-dualism accepts all the six pramanas of Mimamsa, qualified non-dualism accepts only three- pratyaksa, anumana and the Vedas. I will explain these terms when I deal with Nyaya.

The three leading Vedantic teachers (Sankara, Ramanuja and Madhva), do not completely reject Mimamsa, but the paths they have cut out go beyond the mimamsic view: devotion in the case of Visistadvaita and Dvaita and jnana in the case of Advaita.

Mimamsa is called karmamarga since it teaches that karma is all. But karma here does not have the same meaning as in Vedanta which speaks of the three paths- karma, bhakti and jnana. In Vedanta karma is not performed for the sake of karma and is not an end in itself, but consecrated to Isvara without any expectation of reward. This is also karmamarga or karmayoga. It is this view of karma that the Lord expounds in the Gita. In the karmamarga of mimamsakas there is no bhakti. But, all the same, the Vedic rituals create well-being in the world, lead to a disciplined and harmonious social life and bring inner purity to the performer. Mimamsa holds karma to be a goal in itself; Vedanta regards it as a means to a higher end. " (source and credits)

Similarly, neglecting anything or any concept does not mean that any phenomenon is non-existent. Lets understand this with an example of kunDalini.

An advaitin though s/he considers kunDalini as an illusion, may very well have experiences of rising kunDalini. Upon divine command if such blessed soul shifts focus of sAdhanA from advaita to kunDalini yoga, then one will start giving importance to kunDalini, chakra-s, nADI-s and vAyu-s. As a result of giving importance the attention shifts to kunDalini and chakra-s and one begins to have divine experiences related to kunDalini and chakra activation.

We have saints who have talked on both dvaita nd advaita, on bhakti, as well as GYAna. Some have also given importance to karma kANDa. Some names are madhusudan sarasvatI, appaya dixita (dikshita) and sridhara svAmI. We will talk of these AcArya-s later.

Hence shifting the levels and changing thinking pattern is practically possible.

As explained earlier, the different style of writing in prakaraNa grantha-s is because their purpose is to explain basic terms and concepts of advaita, which of course should be written in easy language. Since each and every person is on dvaita on practical ground, hence neti-neti, the core philosophy and ajata vada of Gaudapadacharya cannot be explained to a beginner. Basic concepts are to be explained in a way so that a beginner can understand. Writing style would definitely change. It is not fair or reasonable to compare the writing style of a prakarana granth with that of Brahma sutra bhasya.

As far as composing hymns is concerned, we have already dealt with the topic earlier. The idea is to cover all types of people so that upon maturity, a seeker can turn towards advaita. Advaita is not for everybody. By abiding in Self (GYana), one uproots desires by staying detached from anAtmA (Non-Self). But what about those who cannot establish themselves in GYAna-sthiti. Beginners cannot even detach themselves from their body. For such devotees, others paths are described and propagated by the same AchArya.

jagadguru's task was not only to write commentary and preach just one siddhAnta (advaita). His job was to unite India and make people of all kinds of temperament to follow dharma. At the same time, he has to make sure that all seekers would one day reach the same ultimate destination. Promoting a different siddhanta is reflected in his final teachings and his commentary on Tai. Up. 1/11 (satyam vada, dharma chara, …), where our AchArya promotes vedic rituals until one gets sufficient inner purity. **For this he has to take into consideration mindsets of different people and compose hymns praising deities they worship.** Without devotion, any kriyA or oblation offered in yaGYa is meaningless. All spiritual activities without bhAva (emotional attachment towards God) are mechanical. **AchArya toured the entire length and breadth of India. Hence he was able to understand the mindsets of people of north India, south India, east and West India. He also understood the mindset and ability of laymen and scholars of different varNa-s. Hence acharya promoted panchyatna puja and shanmata to unify the whole of India.**

The reason for choosing 10 upanishads to comment is unknown. As per my understanding and study, which is admittedly very limited, I can say that one of the reason is that all ten upanishads, that achArya chose to comment teaches us traditional method of adhyAropa apavAda. We have seen this in a page dedicated to this philosophy. These ten upanishads are also mentioned as principle upanishads in muktikA upanishad. Other upanishads may focus on one thing like praising one deity like atharvashiras upanishad praising Lord Rudra. Other upanishads are dedicated to explain certain concepts like akshamAlikA upanishad, teaching us the importance of rudrAksha beeds.

Ignoring the multi-talent ability of siddhA-s

History has recorded that there are many prominent personalities in all kinds of fields who have good grip over more than one subject. There are many multi-talented saints can easily change thinking patterns. Many saints are artists proficient one or more form of art like singing, playing musical instruments or painting or composing devotions hymns.

Earlier, we have understood from example of our vArtikakAra that as one matures spiritually, thinking pattern changes. We will further try to understand why a person can change his thinking pattern, change writing style and write on a topic which does not comply with his main philosophy (siddhAnta). Later, we will give examples of few such saints and AchArya-s who are shining gems of sanAtana dharma. Please note that the names are picked up in random manner as writer's memory recalls.

Lets understand how it is possible to adopt a different writing style.

Explaining ability to adopt different philosophy or writing style than main philosophy

Earlier, in the section, 'How can one person have equal reverence for more than one form of God?', we have already understood how it is possible to compose hymns on more than one form of Ishvara. For advaitins, it is easy than for Siva or viShNu bhakta-s. the reason is that advaita sits on karma kANDa which believes in multiple form of deities. shruti-s, smriti-s and purANa-s too do not adhere to simple deity. All advaitins were earlier smArta-s. In smArta sampradAya, five forms of Ishvara are considered as equally potent and manifestations of supreme brahman. Hence for an advaitin, it is easier to have devotion to more than one form of Ishvara.

One may argue- advaitins consider the form of Ishvara as mAyA and as an illusion. How can an advaitin be interested in form of Ishvara? There are many factors for an advaitin to compose hymns on deities. As we move ahead, we will find that gradually answers ger unfolded. We will have to read full article.

For time being we will attempt to give short answer. The reason is, as mentioned earlier, advaita sits on karma kANDa. If we remember the updesha of Kanchi Paramacharya. Here is an extract from the same -

***Kanchi Paramacharya says**,*

"The three leading Vedantic teachers (Sankara, Ramanuja and Madhva), do not completely reject Mimamsa, but the paths they have cut out go beyond the mimamsic view: devotion in the case of Visistadvaita and Dvaita and jnana in the case of Advaita.

...karma here does not have the same meaning as in Vedanta which speaks of the three paths- karma, bhakti and jnana. In Vedanta karma is not performed for the sake of karma

*and is not an end in itself, but **consecrated** to Isvara without any expectation of reward. This is also karmamarga or karmayoga. It is this view of karma that the Lord expounds in the Gita ..." (source and credits)*

Kanchi Paramacharya says, that karma and it's fruits are surrendered to Ishvara. Hence in vedAnta, bhakti is involed. Without bhakti there can be no surrender. bhakti is the foundation upon which GYAna rests. One shifts to advaita after attaining the sufficient inner purity. The pure mind does not loose bhakti. Bhakti exists, but the approach is different. An advaitin does accept higher authority. An advaitin adopts a bhAva of 'abheda' (non-difference) between him and Ishvara.

Here the word 'Ishvara' or 'bhagavAn' might be a misnomier. This is explained in separate section ''Meaning of the word 'bhagavAn' as given in bhAgavat purANa 3.32.31-33'' in article ''viShNu and caturbhuja viShNu''. An advaitin does not imagine a form of Ishvara say krShNa and meditates on him and his glories. When an advaitin says, 'meditate with abheda bhAva', it means there is non-difference between the suddha svarUpa of Ishvara which is formless, attributeless brahman. An advaitin does not say, I am not different from krShNa and I can replicate his deeds, his lIlA-s (Leela, divine sports) like lifting govardhan parvata (mountain), etc.

visiSTAdvaita and dvaita are accepted upto certain point

From the POV of his glories, it cannot be replicated. From this POV, as far as personality of Ishvara is concerned, both philosophies, visiSTAdvaita and dvaita are correct in it's place. A jIva is in essence similar to that of Ishvara as it is created from Ishvara. Hence jIva is qualitatively same, but quantitatively different. An analogy of drop and ocean is given in support of this claim. dvaita is correct from it's POV too. Outwardly, each soul is different, it is unique. brahmA jI is highly evolved soul according to dvaitins. They take into account the personality of jIva. Hence the mind is also taken into account. Each soul is unique from this perspective

Kanchi Paramacharya says that both visiSTAdvaita and dvaita are accepted upto a point. From vyavahArika level (empirical reality, practical reality), both are true from their standpoint.

We will now come back to our main topic - How can a person adopt different writing style and change his thinking pattern. Most common point that is ignored is the spiritual evolution due to intense meditation.

Spiritual evolution is often ignored

The most important factor is the spiritual heights that saints have reached as a result of their sAdhanA. In order to throw light on the importance of spiritual achievement making it possible to adopt different writing style, we must briefly understand spiritual path from meditative POV and the internal changes that one passes through as one progresses spiritually.

Since this is very difficult, I humbly pray to the supreme Goddess, mother mahA-trIpurAsundarI / kunDalini devi, the epitome of wisdom, the supreme Self, to guide me throughout this article. May her grace and infinite compassion flow through me and be the guiding light for all. Without Guru's blessings, nothing is possible, hence I pray to my Guru and param guru to grace me through this inner journey.

The spiritual path is such that we need to purify the mind. It is about transforming an extrovert mind into introvert mind. guru makes external mind introvert and Ishvara establishes introvert mind into heart (source of all).

Mind, which is made from mAyA has three guNa-s, sattva, rajas and tamas. Hence mind too has these guNa-s in different permutations and combinations in each one of us. Out of three sattva is the purest. As one progresses spiritually, percentage of sattva guNa increases. As sattva guNa increases, lower animal qualities like hatred, anger, revengeful attitude, grief, desire to achieve name, fame and glory, etc fade away. Hence there is no desire to spread the name, not even in the name of the Lord. Such divine souls do not take any kind of initiatives by themselves, not even for the upliftment of humanity. First they establish themselves in Atma-sthiti (in the state of Self Realization), then if God orders them to do some work, they do it with detached spirit leaving the fruits of the work upto God. Such saints are not bound by any law, any philosophy, they simply obey the command of God faithfully. It is God who gives them power and required knowledge and resources to fulfill his (God's) mission.

AchArya-s do not hold on to rigidity

AchArya-s are not themselves strongly attached to the siddhAnta-s as much as their followers are. We have not seen founding AchArya-s of different sampradAya-s questioning authorship of Adi Sankara. Neither rAmAnuja, nor mAdhva, nor SrI chaitanya mahAprabhu questioned the authorship of AchArya, though they disagreed with AchArya-s core philosophy of kevala advaita. It is believed that mAdhva used to teach advaita to those who showed interest (or were qualified to learn).

As one progresses spiritually, all kinds of orthodoxy, rigidity and even habit of logical analysis melts away. Mind is no more bound by any logic. This may be difficult to digest but it is a fact.

Conditional Surrender believed to be Unconditional Surrender

Initially, man's devotion is conditional. Even though one might think that his devotion is unconditional it is not true. A meditator feels this way when everything is happening in an expected way and one thinks that meditation is very easy. But when situation becomes adverse, say, there is too much of business loss, or there is no job for 1 year or if one becomes sick and the body does not gets cured, but on contrary, disease becomes more severe, or there may be too much of emotional stress due to clashes in family. in such cases, mind does not support meditating on God. Then one begins to makes effort (purushArtha) to solve the problem. At that time, status of mind is such that it cannot simply leave it to God and move ahead. When a sincere mumukshu (meditator having

burning desire for moksha) passes through this experience, s/he realizes that 'my' surrender to God is 'conditional' and not unconditional. S/he also realizes that 'I' still have ego and that it is troubling me to fully surrender to God and making me to make Self Effort.

The Inner Journey …

God makes such a mumukshu to pass through such experiences for his/her benefit, so that s/he can identify the obstacles, take required action and progress spiritually of course under the guidance of a (Self Realized) guru. It is experience of all sincere mumukshu-s, no matter whatever path they are following (dvaita, advaita, yoga, etc) that spiritual progress is completely dependent upon guru's and God's grace. Sri Ramana Maharshi says, *"From the moment you get into the quest for the SELF and begin to go deeper, the real SELF is waiting there to receive you and then whatever is to be done is done by something else and you, as an individual, have no hand in it. In this process all doubts and discussions are automatically given up, just as one who sleeps forgets all his cares for the time being"*. We may progress spiritually with the help of logical analysis, but finally when mind is completely surrendered to God, in this divine state, intellect is absent. Before going to bed, you may give autosuggestions like 'I want to Sleep', 'my eyes are getting heavy', 'I am feeling sleepy', etc until you fall asleep, but will you repeat these autosugestions after you go to sleep? No. In the same way, in the divine state of unconditional complete surrender, there is absence of qualities like concentration (there is no need to make an effort to concentrate as mind is fully absorbed in thy beloved God or in Brahman), logical analysis, fear and even willingness to be at lotus feet of God, as you already are experiencing intense bliss due to the presence of beloved God. Likes and dis-likes fade away. All doubts fade away and with it logic. If there are no doubts, there can be no answers. It is just Peace and Bliss. Hence even the siddhAnta that one has followed fades away. In the end, bhakti is indeed 'blind' :), devoid of logic. Each mumukshu experiences divine transformation. S/he experiences that heart, mind and intellect gets gradually purified and as a result intensity of Bliss and deep peace increases due to getting closer to God and due to increase in vivek-yukya vairAGYa, shraddhA (faith) and samarpaNa (surrender) and of-course due to diligently practicing spiritual disciplines.

An Analogy …

There are many paths in which supreme state of Self Realization can be reached. But the final destination is one and the same. Lets understand this with analogy. A huge mountain has a broad base, but has only one peak. The ways to reach them are many i.e. by walking from any direction one can reach the peak. Each path is unique and at some point, the path becomes dangerous. A person walking from northern side will experience a different route and scenery than a person walking on southern route. In this process, if a person traveling southern route is handed a map of northern path, will it be of any help to him? No. But as they climb higher and approach the peak, other paths become visible to him. Still a person does not quit his own path and start walking on another path, but begins to understand that there are other ways to reach the peak. After reaching to highest peak, which is only one, any person will have same universal view. Such a person, standing on the highest peak of Self Realization or God realization, as some say, can have a clear view of all paths that reach the peak. He can guide any one following any path, be it northern,

southern, western or eastern and give advise accordingly. He will also caution against the dangers in each path which are unique to that path. Now imagine 4 persons write down their path guided by the same person and hand it over to another person who has not climbed the mountain, infact this person has no experience of climbing any mountain. Such a person is simply a bookworm gathering information based on experiences of others. Can such a person digest that same person has guided different people from different directions? Similar is the case with so-called scholars who themselves have not climbed to any one of the paths, has not passed through any spiritual experiences, still, simply based on their limited intellect try to critically examine writings and life of a divine soul whose mind, heart and intellect were transformed by the grace of guru and God and, as a result, has achieved salvation and gives different types of updesha-s to various types of audiences.

As one progresses spiritually, certain qualities are bound to cultivate and blossom within each one of us like faith, surrender, dispassion in worldly matters, etc. Various paths have their own problems and so certain precautions are prescribed. We will understand precautions prescribed by some paths later on. But the intention of giving such precautions is that one should not be sidetracked or get bound by divine experiences that one experiences during intense meditations. After attaining certain level of purity or say after crossing certain milestone, instructions change. Devotee becomes very humble, negative qualities are flushed out of him and such a person does not indulge in criticizing others with negative intention.

An example …

With this background, lets understand the approach of 3 main paths, yoga, GYAna (advaita) and bhakti w.r.t to activation of kunDalini.

A yogI or a tAntrika will willingly awaken kunDalini devi and let her flow upward through suShumNA nADI. kunDalini reaches sahasrAra after passing through different chakra-s. A yogI will certainly experience this upward flow and activation of different chakra-s. But a GYAnI and bhakta may or may not have such an experience. A yogI cannot believe that progress is possible without activating kunDalini, but a GYAnI will consider it as mithyA and a bhakta will ignore it. Though technically a yogI is right, it is not necessary to willingly activate kunDalinI. As one progresses spiritually, chakra-s and nADI-s are cleansed automatically and kunDalini rises upwards without any conscious effort on the part of a GYAnI or bhakta. Both may very well experience this phenomenon, but their path does not give too much importance. Both of them patiently allow this experience to happen, bow to the supreme reality and pray to God to keep progressing spiritually, as such experience does not indicate the end of spirituality.

The reason for ignoring such a divine experience is not to condemn it, but because it can become a hindrance if one gets attracted towards it. If one gives importance to this experience, then next time, one will wish to have this experience and if it is not experienced, then the mental peace gets disturbed and so will be the meditation. To add to it if one keeps exploring kunDalini, chakra-s, nADI-s and the inner universe, one may easily get sidetracked from the main goal of Self Realization. It is not the path of a GYAnI or a bhakta to willingly activate kunDalini, but for a yogI, it is compulsory.

Change in perception due to progress in sAdhanA

During sAdhanA days, a sAdhaka is walking on a path, and hence s/he must observe some discipline and one-pointedness, but after reaching the destination, what is the need to observe these disciplines? They have served their purpose. Hence, the notion that 'only my path is true and God can be reached only through one path' dissolves along with the melting of the little ego. When such a person, reaching the peak of spirituality, comes back to a level that s/he can interact with society, then such a person can easily understand other paths.

By separating oneself from 5 bodies, one can have control over them. yogI-s say that after the consciousness shifts to higher body, it can control lower body. For example, if a yogI's consciousness ascends from prANamaya kosha to manomaya kosha, then it is very easy to control prANamaya kosha. Wise say that after one gets detached from thoughts and emotions, one can know the nature of mind and can control it. Hence it is very easy to control mind and change it's habits or way of thinking after one transcends beyond mind.

A soul may have done intense meditation in past life or past lives in more than one discipline. For example, he may have practised kunDalini yoga. In the current life, he was initiated into advaita vedAnta. His guru might not have taught him yoga, yet due to his vAsanA (impressions) in his past life, he can have experiences of kuNDalini awakening and rising through various chakras upto sahasrAra.

A divine soul blessed by guru and God, though used to practice advaita on a personal level to reach to supreme reality, can again come to the plane of a sAdhaka (from the plane of a siddha) and can adopt another approach. As mind is destroyed, so are all the notions along with it. When they return back to body consciousness, mind remains untainted from delusions. The ego is not the real one but a pseudo ego, as ego and mind are necessary to keep a connection with physical body., else body will drop.

Even if a person does not return to the state of sAdhaka, as explained earlier with the help of example, such a divine soul can easily understand other paths with utmost clarity, in a much better way than the sAdhaka-s practicing that path since many years.

The delay in reaching 'peak' is due to the obstructions. Spiritually speaking, our own mind is an obstruction. But for a siddha (GYanI, bhakta or yogI), there is no such obstruction. His / her kunDalini is already awakened. His chakra-s and nADI-s are already cleansed and purified. Mind is very pure. Heart is so much developed that it hankers constantly for God and none else. There are no negative qualities in him, no worldly desires that side-track mind. Hence if such an accomplished siddha adopts a different path, say from his main philosophy of advaita to yoga, then a siddha, by God's grace, can easily understand the path (due to deep inner vision) and amazing clarity due to direct experience of supreme goal that yoga text is talking about. s/he knows that yoga texts teach ways to reach about same reality (that he has already realized), but has a different approach. A realized soul, a siddha in any path, by grace of God can also have divine experiences similar to that a yogI or a bhakta or a GYAnI experiences.

Sticking to 'brahma satya jagat mithyA' is an error

The problem with advaita is that many understand it to be only 'brahma satya and jagat mithyA'. However this is not true. This topic is very vast and is out of scope as far as current topic is concerned. We advaitins accept shAstra-s and bhagavad gItA. Hence we too accept the existence of Ishvara, who sung gItA. It is not possible that the words of gItA are authentic but Isvara who sung it is an ilusion. The theory of illusion is for removing dependency of all that is not Ishvara, but one needs to take AdhAra of that which is beyond mAyA in order to rise above it. Ishvara is the only tatva that is capable of doing so. If anyone negates the existence of Ishvara then such a sAdhaka may not be able to progress spiritually. Extreme view about anything is harmful.

We have seen that advaita accepts karma and sAkAra bhakti upto a certain point. For this we have given examples of saints and the commentary on Tai. up. 1.11, satyam vada, dharmam chara. Adi Sankara lays same emphasis while commenting on gItA verses BG 3.3-4 where bhagavAn replies to arjuna's doubts regarding GYAna and karma. It is in these verses that bhagavAn has given two paths - path of action (karma kANDa) and path of renunciation (path of GYAna). Here too, our AchArya explains that until one attains sufficient purity, one has to keep practising karma with bhakti. bhakti is necessary as fruits of karma need to be surrendered. A person will definitely believe in the authority of veda-s and in existence bhagavAn as truth. Siva samhitA (S.Sam.1.20) too talks about two paths.

Hence advaita is a progression from lower truth to higher truth.

There are two types of shriShTi - jIva shriShTi and Ishvara shriShTi. Lets discuss them.

jIva shriShTi and Ishvara shriShTi

jIva shriShTi is that which is created by us. We create relationships. Ishvara has not send us in the world making us a father or a friend or a husband. We choose these relations. In the same way attachment to any person or an object is also a creation of mind. It is our mind that values one object than other. An example is the difference in valuation of Gold, Silver, Iron and Sand. Ishvara has not created any distinction between them nor do they objects themselves decide their own 'value'. It is our mind which creates differences among different objects. Staying biased towards one person, taking things on our own ego, etc are the creation of our own mind. Hence it is called as jIva shriShTi. Advaita asks us to remove this false notion, this illusionary world created by attachment. It is 'Me' and 'mine' that is the culprit.

Ishvara shriShTi is that which created by Ishvara. This includes graha-s (planets), nakshatra-s (constellations), 5 elements, rivers, ocean, mountain, Sun, Moon, etc. Ishvara shriShTi does not cause any obstruction in spiritual progress. Infact, it helps us. We all know that meditating in brahma muhurata is advised by all. If everything is an illusion, then why to believe in concept of brahma muhurata? It is the jIva shriShTi that is negated as it is illusionary.

As mind becomes introvert and pure, one is able to live on basic necessities. Mind does not demand anything special. Such a soul can easily contemplate on Brahman. Ishvara need not have a form. Even if form is ignored, it does not cause harm. Ishvara himself lifts the soul beyond his mAyA and establishes it in himself (brahman). It is the path that demands ignoring anything that is Not-Self. Why would anyone think of that which does not harm? Ishvara shriShTi causes no obstruction in spiritual progress. Later on, mind does not even think of mAyA or any shriShTi. Mind is totally focused on brahman. All else

is non-existent in the mind of an advaitin. After Self-Realisation, when mind comes down and re-awakens, it experiences that this world is real, but is not different than Brahman.

mithyA and mind

We will try to understand why world is said to be 'mithyA'. When mind turns introvert and contemplates on brahman, all the vAsanA-s gets destroyed. Hence there is no more hankering for external objects. With physical body and five senses, mind cannot perceive anything. Mind experiences everything through senses. While science says that when light of external object falls on ceribral cortex, and forms an inverted images, brains registers the senses and interprets it. But according to shAstra-s, wise say that mind travels through senses up to the object and experiences it. It can be said that whatever one experiences is due to mind. Mind is a medium through which one experiences anything and mind takes help of physical body and indriya-s (five senses) to register an external objects. In other words, this world, as we see it, is nothing but a projection of mind. In the same way, the internal objects i.e. the dream world, any thoughts, images or scenes created by mind are entirely it's own creation. Each one will interpret one problem in different way, and hence will find different ways to solve the problem. Mind is unique. Each one of us is unique [character]. Here mind is used interchangeably with jIva. It includes the impressions (vAsanA-s) of past lives. Here we would mean mind to have a particular combination of three guNa-s - sattva, rajas and tamas.

Both external and internal worlds are nothing but the construct of mind.

haTha yoga pradipikA (H.Y.P. 4.58) also says the same. nAtha yogI-s do not consider this world as mithyA, yet they have this explanation. Siva samhitA (S.Sam.1.32-48), another haTha yoga text and patanjali yoga sUtra-s (P.Y.S. 2.22) also have the same opinion. Siva samhitA S.Sam.1.48 clearly says that this world is an illusion.

An introvert mind, focused on brahman, does not run after external objects. If mind does not register the object, it is as good as not present for that person. Hence this world, as we see is mithyA, as it is the perception of mind, which in-turn is coloured by the three guNa-s.

Are External objects plants, mountains, etc also mithyA?

The answer is, what matters is the presence of consciousness. When one is in dream state, or while day dreaming, solid external objects in front of our eyes are not registered by our brain. Hence for that person, that object is absent. Hence for an individual, the world is mithyA, but collectively, the world exist. The POV changes in collective consciousness as not all jIva live in same level of consciousness. Hence each one of us interpret same thing in different ways. Logically, that which is present at one time (even for an individual), but is absent for another time, cannot be called as eternal and hence are not true (as per BG 2.16). Hence the objects and the world are not absolute truth.

The question arises that we do not experience our True Self, but take our body as 'self'. so in that case even Self is not eternal. While this argument seems true, it is not completely

true, as when one experiences the true Self, one realizes that the Self was never lost, it was always present and all that a person experiences or evaluates via mind, body, intellect or senses is due to the power of this true Self. Without the power of this true Self, one cannot experience anything. It is the basis of all. Hence the Self, though, at present, forgotten or hidden or is invisible and unseen, is the sole reason for us to experience anything.

Relative and Absolute Existence

Earlier, we have seen that it is our mind that gives importance to external objects and gives different grades according to it's use. We will understand this with examples to understand how the external objects are also mithyA i.e. they are not true. Everything in this world has relative existence and not absolute existence.

All social relations like father son, brother, etc are all classified under relative existence. A same person is father to one, brother to another, son to another and husband to another person. We will call this person as 1st person and other person as 2nd, 3rd and so on. The existence of relationship is dependent upon multiplicity. A bachelor cannot be called as husband. The only thing (tatva) that can exist without second is brahman. It shines by itself. Since all relationships are relative, hence the worlds created by relationship also come under relative existence. My house is my property and not anyone else property. An Unknown person cannot say that Mr. X's house is 'My House' as it is not his property. What is important is the intention behind building house. It is build with 'me and mine' attitude. Hence a sanyAsin is asked to renounce all relationships and attachments towards all external objects, property and person. Close relatives are considered as poison.

Now we will try to understand the illusionary nature of this world and why sanyAsins are told to avoid it like poison. We will understand this with with the help of story.

Once lived a sanyasin. He had a disciple. They both were wandering monks. One day, Guru asked disciple to meditate and live in one place until he returned from pilgrimage. Disciple obeyed him and started living near the end of forest, near village. Soon, he caught the eyes of villagers and they started visiting him and paying respect to him.

One morning, when he woke up he saw that his cloth was torn, eaten by rats. He had no other cloth to wear. So he decided to keep a pet cat. He got new cloth and a cat to keep a watch on mouse. For survival of cat, he need milk. So he asked someone to donate a cow. Cow needs fodder. One devoted man offered him a patch of land, but disciple himself had to do the farming and plough the farm. Soon he got tired up from hard work. He needed assistant and someone to help him. A devout villager offered his daughter to this sanyasin. In order to take care of his wife's needs, disciple had to earn money. So he started selling excess fodder and expanded his business. Soon he begot children. Years passed by. One day Guru returned. He saw that in place where he left his disciple, someone has build a big house. In order to enquire about his disciple, he knocked the door and was surprised to see his disciple !!!

Just one mistake of accepting cat made this yogi (monk) into a bhogi (householder). Had he not accepted cat, he could have still lived like a monk. the reason for accepting cat was the 'fear of shame' - if he had nothing to wear what would happen? What will the world think of him? Instead of leaving everything on Ishvara, he decided to care take of his

belongings by himself and the result was that his yogic life was destroyed. Hence a sanyAsin should not submit to such mental impulses and emotions like fear, hatred, shame, etc. He ended up creating his 'own world' which could have been avoided by leaving everything to Ishvara.

Whatever is created is relative. It is our own creation which our own mind values. A big house is an asset for an householder and he may be a respected person in society, but for a sanyAsin, building big house is more of a curse then boon. It is liability and not an asset. One thing might be important to one person but not to another. It all depends upon our perception and what we value. All creation is relative and not absolute. Hence the truth is also relative truth. Absolute truth is not dependent upon anything. Wise say, it is only one tatva, it is brahman, the unborn supreme reality, pure consciousness, the substratum of entire universe.

If a pure mind considers this creation as mithyA, one can easily reduce importance of this world and it's objects, leave it 'as it is', accept this world 'as it is' without thinking too much on it. Mind which cannot stay without contemplating on object, now turns towards it's source which temporarily acts as it's object until it dissolves in it. With mind dissolved, ego too dissolves in 'source' loosing it's individual identity. In state of nirvikalp samAdhi, there is absence of both internal (mental) and external (worldly) objects. There is no time, hence there is no movement or an activity. There is no creation, there is no second one. It is just eternal bliss and peace, pure consciousness existing by itself.

We will now come back to explain the change in state of mind as it's keeps purifying due to intense meditation on brahman.

As one progresses, holding on to any philosophy melts away.

The reason for explaining about jIva and Ishvara shriShTi is, advaitins do not 'reject' anything. They just focus on Brahman. (attachment towards) Non-Self is destroyed through detachment. If mind does not hanker in this world (samsAra), then there is only one place after which it hankers - Ishvara or Brahman, as mind cannot stay without hankering. It needs anything to hold on to. **As desires (vAsanA-s) are destroyed, naturally thoughts too gets destroyed. You don't get thoughts about that you are not interested in. Hence mind gets inwardly pushed towards it's source which is Brahman. Please understand that holding to any siddhAnta will also fade away, but at a much later state. Finally even the last desire of 'achieving moksha' or 'abiding in Self' also melts away. Such a soul has not attachment towards any philosophy, nor does the mind and intellect hold on to any logic.** This state is difficult to understand and the author finds it difficult to explain. Certain state of mind can only explained via direct experience. Laymen cannot visualize it or comprehend it. Those who have experienced this blissful 'state of detachment' are capable of imagining this state of mind.

We have been talking about shifting thinking pattern and following different path than that of main philosophy. This is not just a theory, but we have many examples of great saints who were or are living examples of this trend.

Intense concentration, Intuitive Knowledge & ability to change thinking pattern of Realized Saints

Earlier we had talked about two types of objections -

1. One cannot compose over 400 works in short life span of 32 years
2. One cannot change thinking pattern and cannot contradict his own philosophy. Hence those works not in tune with main philosophy cannot be composed by the same AchArya.

We have examples of many saints who have contributed to different philosophies which they themselves have refuted at other places. Prominent examples are: vidyAraNaya svAmi, madhusudan sarasvatI, appaya dixita, GYaneshvara mahArAja, upanishad brahma yogin, annamAchArya, sAyanAchArya, abhinavgupta, and Sriram Sharma Acharya. Many saints were actively involved in composing hymns, independent grantha-s and writing commentaries which crossed their personal path.

Lets list their work in brief.

Examples of Saints who have contributed to more than one philosophy and had written vast literature

vidyAraNya svAmI (VS) is a shining example of multi talented saint who had composed volumenous works on different topics.

karma kANDa: He helped his brother compose commentary on all four veda-s,

dharma smriti: manusmriti vyAkhyAna

tantra: yaGYa tantra sudhAnidhi

shAkta text: Soundarya Lahari Tika, Lalita Sahasrnama Bhashya

Advaita prakaraNa grantha: jivanmukti viveka and panchadaSI

Advaita: Sub-commentaries on Upanishads, vArtikasAra

bhakti: Devyaparadha Stotra

Comparative Work: sarva darshana samgrah - displaying the knowledge about 16 different philosophies

Other works: sUta samhitA tAtparya dipikA (skanda purANa), Jaiminiya Nyayamala Vistara, Vaiyasika Nyayamala Vistara, Sri Yoga Vasishta Ramayana Sangraha (Laghu Yoga Vasishta),

panchadaSI is considered as manual of advaita. In panchadaSI, VS has accepted all forms of Ishvara like gaNesha, Siva, viShNu, etc as supreme brahman.

From his works like panchadaSI and sUta samhitA tAtparya dipikA, we can conclude that shrI vidyAraNya svAmI believed in Siva-viShNu abheda.

Complete list of works attributed to him can be found here

madhusudan sarasvati

madhusudan sarasvatI was an adept in navya nyAna. He is a celebrated name in dvaita-advaita polemics. Composed many works, showed Siva viShNu abheda in his unique commentary on Siva mahimna stotra. Each verse is explained in two ways. One glorifying Siva, another krShNa (Krishna). The only aim was to establish Siva-viShNu-abheda (detailed explanation). though he was deeply devoted to bhagavAn krShNa, he never denigrated status of bhagavAn Siva. MS in his gItA commentary chapter 6 has quoted patanjalI yoga sUtra-s along with vyAsa bhAshya. vyAsa begins his commentary on patanjalI yoga sUtra-s with invocation to the Lord of snakes, epitome of yoga, bhagavAn Siva. This indicates that one person can revere more than one form of Ishvara.

madhusudan sarasavtI (MS) is a shining example of being **adept in the art of grammar and logic, a great krShNa bhakta, a yogI and a great advaitin** defending his sampradAya's siddhAnta and works of his pUrvAchArya-s like SrI harsha's khaNDan-khaNDa-khAdya. Sringeri SankarAcArya SrI bhArtatI tIrtha pays obediences to him and svAmI brahmAnanda (who wrote a commentary on madhusudan sarasvatI's master peice advaita siddhi) advaita siddhi is a polimical work, refuting obbjections raised on advaita siddhAnta mainly on the concept of mithyA (illusion) and anirvachaniya mAyA (unexplainable quality of mAyA).

MS's works include:

Commentary on Gita: Bhagavad-gita-gudhartha-dipika (भगवद्गीता-गूढार्थदीपिका) - a unique and original commentary only next to Adi Sankara's gItA bhAshya.

krShNa bhakti: Paramhamsa-priya (परमहंसप्रिया - भागवताद्यश्लोकव्याख्या) - commentary on two verses of bhAgavat purANa

Bhagavata-bhakti-rasayana (भगवद्भक्तिरसायनम्)

Krishna-kutuhala-nataka (कृष्णकुतूहलम्)

Bhakti-samanya-nirupana (भक्तिसामान्यनिरूपणम्) (?)

Sandilya-sutra-tika (शाण्डिल्यभक्तिसूत्रटीका)

Hari-lila-vakhya (हरिलीलाव्याख्या)

Siva-viShNu-abheda: shivamahimnastotra-TIkA (शिवमहिम्नःस्तोत्रटीका)

Credits and Source

gItA commentary was composed after thoroughly studying Adi Sankara's bhAshya. It has elements of karma, bhakti (sAkAra bhakti), gYAna and even yoga.

In addition to his literary contribution, MS upon the request of Akbhar created a group of military monks called 'nAgA-s'. The reason for such creation is that many maulvis considered it their duty to kill Hindu pandits. Since Maulvis are religious leaders their acts do not come under the normal civil laws. In other words Maulvis enjoys protection for their evil deeds from Muslim rulers. MS approached King Akbhar who advised him to create an army Military Monks. In addition to this, King Akbhar amended the rules and excluded Hindu Monks from being tried under Civil Laws. He gave both Maulvis and nAgA-s Protection from Civil Laws. Now nAgA sAdhu-s could protect Pandits, children and women from ruthless assault of Muslims. This incident is totally opposite to an act of a saint. Advaitins and bhakta-s do not indulge into fighting. Yet situation demanded this step to be taken.

MS is a shining example of Siva-viShNu abheda, worshipping more than one Ishvara, be a krShNa bhakta and an advaitin. He wrote works on more than one topics.

appayA dixita (dikshita)

appaya dixita (AD) composed 104 works. Complete list is available at Shaivam.org. After going through the list, it can be concluded that AD was actively involved in polemical debates, wrote voluminous works on different topics. AD composed hymns dedicated to both Siva and viShNu. AD dedicated his life in defending Siva's supremacy. The sole reason as mentioned by him was that he never wished to denigrate status of viShNu. This sole aim was to defend Siva's supremacy.

viṣṇurvā śankaro vā śruti-śikhara-girāmastu tātparya-bhūmiḥ
na-asmākama tatrva vādaḥ prasarati kimapi spaṣṭam-advaita-bhājām |
kintu-īśa-dveṣa-gāḍhānala-kalita-hṛdām durmatīnām duruktīḥ
bhanktum yatno mama-ayam nahi bhavatu tato viṣṇu-vidveṣa-śankām ||

'I have not the slightest objection, to anyone coming to any conclusion, that the spirit of the Vedas and the Vedantas, declare either Vishnu or Shiva as the First God. I am a follower of the Advaita doctrine. I have no difference between Shiva and VishNu. But if in order to establish Vishnu as the main God, if somebody starts abusing Shiva or hates him, I cannot bear it. There are as many proofs or pramanas in the Vedas, Vedanta, Puranas and Agamas to establish that Shiva is a mighty God, as there are to prove that Vishnu is a powerful one. However, I am propagating my Vedic dharma and indulging in debate and disputation, only to persuade everyone not to hate Shiva. Let no one have the slightest doubt that I either hate or wish to denigrate Lord Vishnu simply because I praise the grace and greatness of Supreme Lord Shiva.'

AD too believed in Siva-viShNu-abheda. AD was an advaitin, karma kANDin and a Siva bhakta. He was a adept in school on logic.

GYAneshvara mahArAja

GYAneshvara mahArAja or GYanedeva, as he is reverentially called was also a multi-talented saint. He started varkari movement, a bhakti mass-movement dedicated to Lord viThThala (a form of viShNu/krShNa), composed amritAnubhava after he got initiation in nAtha yoga. In this work he praised Siva-Sakti as supreme brahman. His commentary in gItA, bhAvArtha popularly known as GYaneshvarI gItA is originally written in marathi language. It covers karma, bhakti (sAkara bhakti), GYana and kunDalini yoga. Like MS, GYanadeva too has explained kunDalini in chapter six of bhagavad gItA. His work chAngadeva pAshShTi is very popular. Devotional works like haripAtha (हरिपाठ) and various abhanga-s in marathi is also popular. abhanga-s are short hymns or poems of 4 two-line verses.

His legacy was carried on by saints like sant tukArAma, sant mukAbAI, sant nAmadeva, sant ekanAtha.

GYAndeva, who started varkari movement chanting names of hari and moving in crowds, left his physical body at will, at the age of 22. A yogI can leave his physical body at will by pulling prANa and apAna vAyu in suShumNA nADI and raising it to sahasrAra chakra. yogI raises prANa shakti further in the space merging prANa shakti into cosmos.

GYAnadeva is revered by vaiShNava-s, Saiva-s, nAtha yogI-s, tAntrika-s and GYAnI-s (advaitins) alike.

GYAnedeva is another example of great saint who saw Siva-viShNu abheda, covered all paths karma, bhakti, GYana and yoga.

upanishad brahma yogin

upanishad brahma yogin (UBY) or upanishad brahmendra is a honorific title of shrI rAmachandrendra sarasvatI associated with kAnchi matha. UBY wrote 45000 grantha-s. UBY is the only saint to write commentaries on all 108 upanishads mentioned in muktikA upanishad. UBY composed independent hymns praising his IStava devata rAma, Siva and other forms of Ishvara. He wrote commentary on brahma sUtra. In addition to this, UBY wrote prakaraNa grantha-s and wrote commentary on them too. More details about his life and works can be found here.

UBY, though a rAma bhakta has commented fairly on non-vaiShNava upanishads, i.e. Saiva, SAkta, yoga and sAmAnya upanishads. It is said that he laid great emphasis on OM.

UBY believed in Siva-viShNu abheda.

Other AchArya-s who wrote voluminous works are

annamAchArya

annamAchArya composed and sang 32,000 Sankirtanas, 12 Satakas (sets of hundred verses), Ramayana in the form of Dwipada,SankIrtana Lakshanam (Characteristics of sankIrtanas), Sringaara Manjari, and Venkatachala Mahatmamyam.

sAyanAchArya

sAyanAchArya is credited to write commentary on all 4 veda-s, a highly voluminous work. vidyAraNya svAmI helped him in this task. His veda-bhAshya (commentaries in veda-s) are considered as authentic by both eastern and western scholars.

abhinavgupta

abhinavgupta was a unique AchArya who composed a voluminous independent tAntrika work, tantraloka and wrote commentaries on it from three different standpoints, each one indicating the understanding according to level of evolution of consciousness.

Sriram Sharma Acharya

Sriram Sharma Acharya is a modern saint who wrote voluminous works on almost all aspects of life. He translated all 4 veda-s and 18 purANA-s. He wrote independent works on almost all aspects of life.

From above examples, we can conclude that a saint can change thinking pattern, praise more than one deity and can write works on other topics like nyAya or vaisheshikhA which they have themselves contradicted in some of their works. It is not an uncommon trend to write commentary on on different topics.

Sri Ramakrishna and Abhinav Vidyatheertha - Unique examples of practising different disciplines

We can see this in the life of **Sri Ramakrishna** who has practised multiple disciples, multiple philosophies and had successfully experienced the common divinity in them. He was a living example that all paths lead to same truth. Similar is the case with the AcArya-s of Sringeri maTha. Sringeri paramAcharya, **Sri abhinava vidyAtirtha mahAsvAmI**. He had practised different disciplines like hatha yoga, narmihma upAsanA, laya yoga, kunDalinI yoga, advaita sAdhanA (path of negation). Sringeri paramAchArya also had divine vision of bhagavAn Siva and ambA mAtA, the presiding deity of Srigeri SAradA maTha. His life is recorded in a book, 'Yoga, Enlightenment and Perfection of Sri Sri Abhinav Vidyatheertha Mahaswami'. More details can be found here. We would like to add the name of **svAmI brahmAnanda, SankarAcArya of jyotir matha**. He revived jyotir matha after 165 years. He was considered as an authority on shrI vidyA. swAmijI was an adept sAkta and an advaitin.

Examples of Intuitive knowledge

Sri Aurobindo once said - that realized people do not need to think, as ordinary folks do - there is no mental activity involved for them. All their knowledge is intuitive, it comes down directly without effort. That is how Sri Aurobindo wrote his major works. In fact Sri Aurobindo has specifically said that when the mind comes in the middle it ruins the task.

"In writing also thoughts may not pass through the mind at all. While I was writing for the Bande Mataram, they didn't pass through the mind; they either came directly to the pen and I didn't know beforehand what I was writing or they came just like that (gesture from head downwards). Sometimes they passed through the mind which was quite passive. If the mind takes part then the whole thing gets spoiled. In poetry it is the activity of the mind that meddles." (*Source: Talks with Sri Aurobindo Volume 2*, page 572)

How can we forget a great saint **vAlmiki** who composed rAmAyaNa. As per legend, when Valmiki cursed a hunter who killed two loving birds, the curse came in the form of poetry. Valmiki was not a poet, but since he was chosen by the supreme God to author the great epic, Ramayana, he was given this gift. When the Lord makes us an instrument and entrusts us some work, he will also give us ability to complete the task. Similarly in case of Adi Shankara, he did not want to enter into debates, he did not want to spread advaita, he did not wanted to write commentary on Brahma Sutra, but it was upon the order of Lord Shiva he composed commentary and later on Bhagavan Ved Vyas tested him and authenticated his work. bhagavAn extended AchArya's life to further 16 years and blessed him to spread the the truth of upanishads and revive vedic dharma. It is with their blessings that Adi Shankara was able to fulfill their work.

Sri Ramakrishna was not learned in shastras, however his teachings in the form of parables and simple instructions are always in line with shastras. They do not contradict shastras. KAnchi Paramacharya calls Sri Ramakrishna as great men.

It is well known that **Sri Ramana Maharshi** was not a sanskrit scholar. But when he translated Upadesha Saram (Upadesh Sar) into Sanskrit, everyone was surprised with the accurate translation and with poetic beauty. Similarly his 'forty verses on reality' and 'Who Am I' are much appreciated and revered by advaitins.

Paul Brunton who came to India in search of fully realized saint. He met Kanchi Paramacharya. Paramacharya directed him to meet Sri Ramana Maharshi.

Srimad Rajchandra composed Atma Siddhi in just 90 minutes.

Great Saints in communion with Ishvara do not need to edit, proofread and revise their works. hence they take little time to compose hymns and other works.

State of Self Realization gives one unlimited power

State of Self Realization gives one unlimited power and nothing is unachievable for such a person as he is one with the source from which everything gets power. This state cannot be imagined by extrovert mind, hence they cannot comprehend the power which realized saints possess. We have **Mahavatar Babaji**, a deathless saint, **Aghori Kenaram**, a men who had control of panch mahabhutas. We have **Sant Jnaneshwar (Gyaneshvar)** who made a buffalo to sing Bhagavat Purana. Though all countries have produced many great men, our country has unique rich heritage of many such men of extraordinary power. It is said that Einstein used only 10 % of his brain. Still he was genius. Great yogI-s and realized saints can increase their brain power and can achieve feats which are generally unthinkable by laymen. From spiritual POV, availability of their works indicates that their works are divinely revealed since they have stood the test of time.

We will now shift to second response which can be skipped.

Brief Compilation: Examples of Saints

We have examples of great acharyas who have written voluminous works. **SriRam Sharma Acharya** of Gayatri Parivar wrote commentaries and translated Gita, 108 upanishads and Brahma Sutra, along with other independent works. Sriram Sharma Acharya wrote books on more than 3000 topics covering all walks of life. Sriram Sharma Acharya is respected by Karpatri Swami (also known as Hariharananda Saraswati), disciple of Swami Brahmananda Saraswati, Shankaracharya of Joshi Math. **Swami Vivekanand** memorised entire 'Encyclopedia Britannica'. **Srimad Rajchandra** composed Atma Siddhi in just 90 minutes. We have **sAyanAcharya**, who wrote commentaries on all 5 veda-s (shukla and Krishna Yajurveda as two). We have **Upanishad Brahmayogin** who wrote commentaries on 108 upanishads of Muktika Upanishad, along with many independent works, writing more than 45000 grantha-s. He wrote independent grantha-s and wrote commentaries on them too. Sri Tallapaka **annamAchArya** (1408-1503) the mystic saint composer of the 15th century. He composed and sang 32,000 Sankirtanas, 12 Satakas (sets of hundred verses), Ramayana in the form of Dwipada,SsankIrtana Lakshanam (Characteristics of sankIrtanas), Sringaara Manjari, and Venkatachala Mahatmamyam.

Examples of divinely guided Saints

Likewise we have saints who were divinly guided for their works or had performed miracles in life. GYAneshvara had made a buffalo chant bhAgavat purANa. **Sri Ramakrishna** didnt study any shAstra-s, but his experiences were in line with shAstra-s. **Sri Ramana Maharshi** didnt study sanskrit, but when he translated Upadesha Saram (Upadesh Sar) into Sanskrit, everyone was surprised with the accurate translation and with poetic beauty. Similarly his 'forty verses on reality' and 'Who Am I' are much appreciated and revered by advaitins.

Sri Aurobindo once said - that realized people do not need to think, as ordinary folks do - there is no mental activity involved for them. All their knowledge is intuitive, it comes down directly without effort. That is how Sri Aurobindo wrote his major works. In fact Sri Aurobindo has specifically said that when the mind comes in the middle it ruins the task.

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Similarly, we also have examples of great saints who comtributed to more than one art or more than one philosophy (some names are repeated).

Brief compilation: Examples of Saints who have contributed to more than one art or philosophy

Meditation on more than one deity and in more than one way:

We can see this in the life of **Sri Ramakrishna** who has practised multiple disciples, multiple philosophies and had successfully experienced the common divinity in them. He was a living example that all paths lead to same truth. Similar is the case with the AcArya-s of Sringeri maTha. Sringeri paramAcharya, **Sri abhinava vidyAtirtha mahAsvAmI**. He had practised different disciplines like hatha yoga, narmihma upAsanA, laya yoga, kunDalinI yoga, advaita sAdhanA (path of negation). Sringeri paramAchArya also had divine vision of bhagavAn Siva and ambA mAtA, the presiding deity of Srigeri SAradA maTha. His life is recorded in a book, 'Yoga, Enlightenment and Perfection of Sri Sri Abhinav Vidyatheertha Mahaswami'. More details can be found here. **svAmI brahmAnanda**, SankarAcArya of jyotir matha revived jyotir matha after 165 years. He was considered as an authority on shrI vidyA (Sri Vidya Upasana). svAmijI was an adept sAkta and an advaitin.

Contribution to more than one philosophy

Going back to medieval period, we have great AcArya-s from various traditions. **Abhinavgupta** is a unique AcArya. An authority on Kashmir Shiavism, was a multitalented AcArya who wrote drama scripts, composed tantra loka, a text for advanced tAntrika-s and even wrote a commentary on bhagavad gItA, though being a Saiva at heart. His composition tantraloka is considered as a masterpiece. He himself wrote unique commentaries on it explaining one verse from three different levels of evolution of human consciousness. We have the great names like **nAmabodhendra savasvatI**, SankarAcArya of kAnchi maTha, who spread rAma nAma and was an advaitin. The great **vidyAraNya svAmI** who helped his brother **sAyanAcArya** write commentaries on all 4 veda-s (which talk about karma kANDa) and also wrote sub-commentaries on Sankara bhAShya-s of some upanishads and even composed independent compositions like jivanmukti viveka and pancadaSI, often called as manual of advaita. His masterpiece is sarva-darshan-samgrah, in which he has displayed his knowledge about 16 different types of arts and philosophies like advaita, viSiSTAdvaita, dvaita, chArvAka, etc. We must add the name of **SrI madhusudan sarasvatI** (MS) who is eulogized by one AcArya as the 'one who knows the limits of sarasvatI but sarasvatI does not know the limits of madhusudan sarasvatI's knowledge'. He is a celebrated name in dvaita-advaita debate who is said to have put to rest all logical objections raised against advaita. MS was an ardent krishna bhakta but a staunch advaitin. MS has composed a unique commentary on Siva mahimna stotra. MS has interpreted each verse in two ways, one eulogizing Siva and another eulogizing Krishna (viShNu). As per MS, the sole intention for composing this commentary was to establish Siva-viShNu abheda. Then there is **appaya dikshita** (AD), a well known name in Saiva as well as advaita who has composed more than 104 works. AD has composed hymns on Siva, and viShNu. He contested against vaiShNava-s with a sole purpose of refuting Siva-deShI-s. AD has no problem accepting viShNu as 'God'. He performed vedic rites (karma kANDa) and even wrote a commentary on brahmasUtra-s. He also compared different commentaries on brahmasUtra-s and gave his opinion. There are many examples like **kAlidAsa** writing plays centered around bhagavAn rAma and bhagavAn skanda by the names raghuvansha and kumArsangam. Finally we will add one more name to this short list. His name is **GYAnadeva mahArAja**. GYanadeva started a varkari movement, a mass movement where people of all varNa-s (caste) can take part on singing glories of Lord viThThala (a form of Lord viShNu). He wrote commentary on gItA, popularly known as GYAneshvarI, where he has accepted kriShNa as supreme Godhead. He has also described kunDalini in chapter 6. He composed amritAnubhava, a text glorifying Siva-Sakti and saluting his brother, guru and nAtha yogI nivrittinAtha. nAtha yogI-s worsihp Lord Siva. When a great siddha, chAndeva, who had control over 5 natural elements (earth, water, etc) came to know about this young boy's feets, he send him an empty letter to him. The reason, he said was to ask few question to him. This siddha wanted to mock this young boy. GYanadeva wrote 67 verses on this plain paper. Impressed with the response, chAngadeva surrendered to GYAnadeva nad made him his guru. These verses are popularly known as 'chAngadeva pAshaShTI'

From the above explanation, we would like to conclude that it is very much possible for siddha to compose hymns one various deities and even expound a different siddhAnta. If a siddha can expound different philosophies, why can't an avatAra? Adi Sankara was no ordinary human being, he was an avatAra.

Adi Sankara

Adi Sankara was one of the brightest of the bright. He learned to speak sanskrit when he was one year old, learned to write when he was 2 years old, and mastered veda-s when he was 8 years old.

Miracles are associated with the life of Adi SAnkara. We know from mAdhaviya digvijaya, that Adi Sankara at very tender age, before taking sanyAsa, changed course of river pUrNA by invoking her. He also stored flood water of river in his kamanDala. Only a siddha yogI can perform such miracles. Most of them are avatAra-s like the great mahAsiddha-s shrI gorakhnAtha and shrI matsyehdranAtha who are revered by buddhists as 'mahA-siddha-s'.

Most hymns are not voluminous and hence it can take even 15 minutes to spontenously compose hymns which are divinely guided and written under deep trans. There are no thoughts while composing, everything is sponteneous and written based on intuitions in bhAvAsthA (transcendental state of intense bliss due to vision of divine form of Ishvara).

Poet and Preacher

There are two types of works composed by Adi Sankara

1. As a preacher
2. As a poet

A preacher has to preach and defend a doctrine that he is practising and preaching. A preacher has to preach that which is suitable to the mental make-up of masses. But this is not the case with a poet. Poet is not bound by any philosophy. A Poet will use all his imagination and his art to sing glory of Paramatman says Kanchi Paramacharya. A poetry is composed spontaneously in trans. That is why his works have stood the test of time.

We have also understood that prakaraNa grantha-s and commentary on brahma sUtra address different audience. One cannot be a benchmark to test authenticity of another.

From various examples of saints, we can conclude that it is possible to -

- Compose hymns more than one form of Ishvara
- Have equal reverence for other forms of Ishvara
- Write commentaries on various siddhAnta-s
- Compose independent grantha-s which adhere to different siddhAnta than the main siddhAnta that author is practising
- Can shift thinking pattern and adapt different philosophy and 'way of thinking'
- Can write voluminous works which are not possible for by laymen.

As a preacher, he wrote Bhashyas on prasthAntrayi and some other shastra-s like viShNu sahasranAma stotra. Advaita is difficult to understand and practice for laymen. Adi Sankara walked length and breath of India Preaching Advaita. He had to connect day-2-day activities with advaita and at the same time explain concepts of advaita in simple way, so that laymen can understand them. Hence he created prakaraNa grantha-s. If prakaraNa Grantha-s were not necessary, then he would not have asked sureshvarAchAya to compose independent work, which came to be known as Naikarmya Siddhi. Infact, from the example of sureshvarAchAya, we can know that even his Guru Brothers thoughts that Sureshvaracharya would not do justice in writing sub-commentaries on Brahma Sutras as earlier he was a mimAmsaka. In his vArtikA-s he as refuted arguments put forth by him as a mimAmsaka. After reading naishkarmya siddhi, Adi Sankara was very pleased and satisfied with his work. If a disciple can change his 'way of life' and 'perception', why can't Guru. Afterall, Sankara bhagavadpAda is believed to be an partial avatar of Lord Siva.

As a poet he has composed many hymns and independent stotras.

It is not right to compare works based on particular siddhAnta with that of poems.

It is not right to consider an Advaitin to be stone hearted and keep sticking to 'Brahma Satya, Jagat Mithya'. Many negatively publicise advaita as 'mAyAvAda' and that they 'oppose' deity worship. This is absolutely wrong. advaita sits on the strong foundation of vedic karma kANDa and advocates temple worship and devoting our heart and soul to any one form of Ishvara.

To gauge and limit the potential of a realized saint and an avatar, who descended on earth to revive vedic dharma is an insult to him.

Confirmation Adi Sankara as Author of prapanchasAra opens new doors

amalAnanda in his sub-commentary 'vedAnta kalpataru' has quoted prapanchsAra, 'kalpataru' is a gloss on sub-commentary on brahmasUtra bhAshya by vAchaspatI mishrA's famous bhAmatI, which in turn is a sub-commentary on srI Adi SankarAcharya jI's commentary (i.e. sUtra bhAshya) on brahma sUtra (vedAnta sUtra). appayA dixita has further written a gloss (further explanatory notes for more clarification) on amalAnanda's kalpataru by the name parimala. He too didnt question amalAnanda's quoting of prapancasAra (source and credits)

Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭatiri (1559–1645) authenticates the ‘Prapañchasāra’ of Śaṅkara. Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭatiri was a mathematician and author of very popular composition ‘Nārāyaṇīyam’, which is an essence of bhAgavat purANA, is revered by all. (source and credits)

(Credits to Sri V. Subramanian ji of Adbhutam Blog)

When two saints belonging to two different schools as authenticated authorship of prapanchasAra belonging to Adi Sankara, no room for any doubt is left. Confirming the authorship of prapanchasAra belonging to Adi Sankara opens new doors. It breaks the

conventional view that Aid Sankara adhered to only one siddhAnta. It also allows one to accept Adi Sankara as the author of saundarya lahiri a text highly revered by SAkta-s.

Authorship of saundarya lahiri

Critics reject the attribution of authorship of saundarya lahiri (SL) to Adi Sankara. They argue that SL is a sAkta text. Though both believe in advaita as the final state, sAkta philospphy is not similar to that of advaita. It accepts this world as real. However from the above analysis, it can be understood that there is no reason not to believe that Adi Sankara has authored SL. Adi SAnkara was not interested in writing any commentaries, nor interested in entering into debates. He wrote commentaries because his guru told him to do so. AcArya wrote commentary on brahmasUtra after he got order from bhagavAn Siva himself. bhagavAn veda vyAsa himself tested Adi Sankara, satisfied with AcArya's arguments, he accepted AcArya's commentary on brahma sUtra-s. After surrendering the commentary at the feet of veda vyAsa, AcArya said that his job is now done and that he is willing to leave his body in the auspicious muhurata in the divine presence of bhagavAn. bhagavAn veda vyAsa didnt allow Adi Sankara to give up his body and extended his life for 16 more years. bhagavAn also ordered him to remove misconceptions. What more is needed to say about such a soul, who himself is an avatAra, is blessed by three avatAra, his guru govindapAda (avatAra of sheShanAga), GYAnamUrti bhagavAn Siva and epitom of wisdom, saviour of sanAtana dharma, bhagavAn veda vyAsa.

Vedic sages are known to be a realized souls yet are engaged in worldly duties and even performing yaGYa-s for welfare of all. Even today, brAhmaNa-s (Brahmins) while practising sandhyA vandanA practice prANAyama. yoga and advaita used to go together. The paths are different but final state is advaita only.

An advaitins can also stay in a dual plane and accept a form of God to be supreme. He does so for teaching devotion to laymen. A sanyAsin is an idol to be followed and adorned by the society. Hence he too behaves in a certain way so that people coyinghi will progress spiritually.

From the lives fo Sri Ramakrishna and Sri Abhinav Vidyatheertha Mahaswami, we can understand that different spiritual disciplines can be practised by one individual. Hence there is no reason to question the ability of Adi Sankara.

To add to the above, **there are about 35 commentaries on SL each attributing it's authorship of Adi Sankara. Later revered AcArya-s like laxmidhara and bhAskararAya makin accepted authorship of Adi Sankara. Such a strong evidence cannot be ignored.**

A jagatguru needs to work for upliftment of people of all types of temperament.

As a laymen, what should I do?

The above matter was present with the intent that the critical analysis and guaging methods to determine authenticity of works attributed to Adi Sankara is not fool proof. It is more or less guess work. Critics are themselves neophites as far as their spiritual achievement is concerned. Great Realized saints do not indulge into such critical analysis which are of little importance to them. Atleast AcArya-s of advaita paramparA do not indulge.

We should not feel discomfort if somebody makes such claims. We should avoid getting engaged in such debates, as we would lose our faith in shastra-s, if we try to be a historian or a fact finder. Unless and until any work is against the basic doctrine of advait and it refutes the basic tenets of advaita, it can be accepted. Authorship is secondary. Vivek Chudamani, whose authorship is disputed (accordingly to some) is extremely important to understand advaita vedanta. Hence it's importance cannot be ruled out. To our knowledge, which indeed is very limited, None of the basic advaita texts or none of the stotras attributed to Adi Shankara contradict Advaita. If studied with faith, they all will lead you to core methodology of neti, neti, ony when we are prepared for it. Even bhakti is useful, Yoga is useful, the final state is sdvaita sthiti and hence pure advaita, which is a path of negation can be applied upon maturity, under the guidance of a realized Guru. Most people meditate on OM. There is no need to read too many shastras. Read only the ones that suit your prakruti, in this case Guru is extremely important or the standard texts that all advaitins refer. Not everything is needed to be mastered for personal spiritual progress.

Let Sankara Charitra may not be 100 % authentic. It is possible that some verses are added later. Does this make the whole charitra fake? Even Gita is said to be tempered. Our acharya has not commented on verse 1 of chapter 13 (BG 13.1), while Ramanujacharya has commented on the same verse. If we take this verse into account total verses in Gita would be 701. Abhinavgupta added 16 more verses to standard 700. gItAmAna verses on mahAbhArata mentions total number in gItA to be 745. However, We todays' accepted version has 700 or 701 verses. Does this mean that whole Gita is fake and an interpolation?

Lets stay calm. Lets dump all the unnecessary confusion and doubt over authorship and let us continue our spiritual journey with full faith and surrender. May paramAtmAn shower his grace and show us the right path.

We would like to conclude this article by offering prayers and gratitude with an intense feeling of being blessed by the divine mother and guru without this this article could not have been possible.

Hari OM

|| Shri Gurubhyo Namah ||

|| Shri Adi Shankara Bhagavadpada Sharanam ||

|| Om Shri Paramatmane Namah ||

Credits: Thanks to Omkara and JigyAsu, members of Hindu Dharma Forums

We end this article with list of works attributed to Adi Sankara. Please note that this list is not authentic nor it is exhaustive.

Brief list of works attributed to Adi Sankara

In the above context following works are said to be genuine work of Adi Sankara.

General observation is that srI Sankara bhagavadpAda's prakaraNa grantha-s are unique in the sense they are to the point, free from polemical tinge and refutation of rival sampradAya.

[needs to be verified]

Commentaries: Considered Authentic

1. Commentaries on 10 principle Upanishads
2. bhagavad gItA bhASya
3. brahma sUtra bhASya
4. yOga TArAvalI / Yoga-sütra-bhäsya-vivarana - Gloss on commentary yog Sutra Bhasya by Ved Vyas on Patanjali' Yog Sutra
5. Adhyätma-patala-vivarana, Short commentary on parts of Apastamba Dharma Sutra (sub-commentary on the chapter about inner atman)
6. viShNu sahasranAma bhASya
7. Commentary on sanat-sujAtiya (of mahAbhArat)
8. prapancsAra tantra - amalAnanda in his sub-commentary 'vedAnta kalpataru' has quoted prapanchsAra. Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭatiri (1559–1645) authenticates the 'Prapañchasāra' of Śaṅkara. (Credits to Sri V. Subramanian ji of Adbhutam Blog) [1] - No one has questioned the authenticity.

[1] amalAnanda in his sub-commentary 'vedAnta kalpataru' has quoted prapanchsAra, 'kalpataru' is a gloss on sub-commentary on brahmasUtra bhAshya by vAchaspatI mishrA's famous bhAmatI, which in turn is a sub-commentary on srI Adi SankarAcharya jI's commentary (i.e. sUtra bhAshya) on brahma sUtra (vedAnta sUtra). appayA dixita has further written a gloss (further explanatory notes for more clarification) on amalAnanda's kalpataru by the name parimala. He too didnt questioned amalAnanda's quoting of prapancasAra.

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(Credits to Sri V. Subramanian ji of Adbhutam Blog)

Commentaries: Authenticity Doubtful

1. bhASya on GAyatri Mantra, discovered by Swami Chinmayananda in Himalayas
2. bhASya on SvetaSvatara upanishad
3. bhASya on Uttara tApanIya upanishad - some consider it as authentic.

Philosophical Works: Considered Authentic

1. upadeSa sahasrI (because it's concept matches Brahmasutra and ajata vada)
2. Atma bOdh - Commentary (Tika) by svAmI madhUsudan sarasvatI, hence authentic.
3. viveka cUuDAmaNI – Commentary by Sri candraSekhara bhArati, SankarAcArya of Sringeri, hence confirmed. John Grimes in his scholarly way has refuted the reasons for not accepting viveka chUDAmaNi as not authored by AdI Sankara in his book. [1]
4. vAkya Vritti - Quoted by srI vidyAraNya svAmI in PanchadaSI 7.71-78 relating to vAkyavRRitti verses 44, 45, 46, 47, 38, 39, 40, 41
5. aparOkshAnubhUtI - aparOkshAnubhUtI TIkA by srI vidyAraNya svAmI
6. praSnottara ratnamAlIka - Basic important text, in simple and short Q & A format, some say it was written by Adi Sankara but some sloka-s were added later by his followers. Advaitins reject this claim.

[1] Professor John Grimes provides a balanced assessment of Vivekachudamani according to the Hacker criteria step by step and states that —"A strong case can be made that Vivekachudamani is a genuine work of Sankara's and that it differs from in certain respects from his other works in that it addresses itself to a different audience and has a different emphasis and purpose."

He avers that "there is no rule that insists that a prakarana treatise should be consistent with a commentary". (2004, p. 13) (Credits)

We are inclined to agree with Professor Grimes' balanced assessment. Vivekachudamani is an ancillary treatise of Sankara addressed to different audience with a specific emphasis and purpose.

Devotional and Other Works: Considered Authentic

1. daxINAmurtI Stotra, commentary named mAnasollAsa by sUreSvarAcArya
2. Siva panchAkshara stotram - Commentary by padmapadAchArya
3. Kanakadhara Stotram - From Madhaviya Shankara Digvijay, Adi Shankara composed it when he visited poor family for alms. Kanak means gold. Stotra goes to Laxmi Mata
4. SivAnanada lahirI - from Madhaviya Shankara Digvijay, Adi Shankara composed it when he visited in Sri Sailam along with his disciples.
5. saundarya Lahiri - Over 35 commentaries all attributing work to Adi Sankara. Commentary by Chandrashekharendra Sarasvati of Kanchi math (some consider only 41 verses as authentic. Total verses are 100) laxmidhara kavi has written a commentary on all 100 verses, hence it's authentic.
6. maniShA pancakam – Confirmed by Kanchi Paramcharya - from Madhaviya Shankara Digvijay, composed when Adi Shankara met Lord Shiva
7. upadesha pancakama / Sopana Pancakam – from Madhaviya Shankara Digvijay, final Instructions by Adi Shankara Confirmed by Kanchi Paramacharya

8. Sivapadadi kesanta stotram - Historically verified by KAnchi Math
9. Sivakesadi padanta stotram - Historically verified by KAnchi Math
10. nirvana shatTakam / AtmaShaTakam) - similar to his core teachings
11. mAyA pancakam - similar to his core teachings.
12. kaupina panchakam
13. bhaja-gOvindam (earlier known as moha mudgara)- Stresses on vairAgya and Surrender to srI hari, considered an authentic.
14. gurU-asTakam (gurvAShTakam) - hymn Dedicated to glory of Guru. Even if one has achieved everything in this world, without surrendering to Guru, one achieves nothing
15. gurU pAdukA stotram - hymn dedicated to Glory of Guru
16. bhAvanA-aShTakam (bhAvanAShTakam)
17. annapurna stotra
18. viShNu sat-padI (six verses on Vishnu)
19. ganga stotra
20. devya-aparAdha (DevyaparAdha) KshamApana stotra
21. ved sAra Siva stotra - Shiva as an essence of Vedas)
22. SivanAmAlyaShTakam
23. Siva-aparAdha (SivaparAdha) KshamApana Stotra
24. dvAdasa manjarikA stotra

Now we will list works or compositions of Sri Adi Sankara which the so-called experts, fact finders, linguists and (not-so-neutral) Historians claims to be of doubtful authenticity and or consider them as wrongly attributed to the great Acharya. But before we list them, there are certain points which I would like to share with you.

Rejecting these compositions is like saying that a well qualified mother or a teacher who has done PhD in Quantum Mechanics or on Theory of Relativity cannot teach kids of pre-primary and primary school. So a well qualified mother cannot teach 'A' for apple, and 'B' for bat, to their children. In other words, a person who has undergone complex study simply cannot talk and express himself or herself in simple way that layman understands. A mathematical genius simply cannot teach 1 + 1 = 2 and that he cannot be multi-talented and so cannot be a poet at the same time and cannot compose rhymes that help kids learn maths or memorize mathematical concepts easily. Do you agree?

According to those who reject these works, they adhere to the commentary of Brahma Sutras as authentic and if the writing style, the core concept is not reflected in any composition, then they reject them. They do not understand that Brahma Sutras are to be studied after thorough study of Gita and Upanishads. By sincere reading of Brahma Sutras with Sankara Bhashya, one's doubts are dissolved and one simply enters into Nirvikalpa Samadhi. This happens to an advanced sadhaka and not beginner. Hence Brahma Sutras are not for beginners. Similar is the application of Self Enquiry 'Who Am I' This is not a mental exercise, but a question that a seeker asks to himself or herself and the result of enquiring 'Who Am I', mind turns introvert and then merges in it's source. One does not have to keep asking the question 'Who Am I' every 5 seconds or every time a thought arises. Later, you do not even need to ask the question. Simply be aware and mind with detach and dissolve into it's source. But this does not happen to a beginner. Hence Sri Ramana Maharshi's works are not for beginners neither is his preferred way of Self Enquiry which is indeed a direct and fastest way to 'Be as you are' in your natural state.

If Adi Sankara has mentioned and expounded 'adhyAropa apavAda' or has said this world to be anitya or asatya or mithyA, then this philosophy has to be found in all his compositions. So hynms dedicated to SaguNa Brahman (Like ViShNu, Siva, devI, gaNesha, etc) are not considered as authentic as Advaita in it's final state of nirvikalpa samAdhi there is no mAyA, and not form of Ishvara. They forget that traditionally, advaita sits on

top of smArta dharma, which accepts different forms of Ishvara as equal manifestations of Brahman and one has to worship them in order to gain inner purity before renouncing them and practising advaita meditation.

Philosophical Works: Authenticity doubtful

While these are accepted by western scholars, they discard some popular works like

1. tatva bOdh - Basic Text, considered very important
2. panjikaraNa - Important work, dealing with creation and Advaita, work attributed to vidyAraNya svAmI
3. prabOdha sudhAkara - stresses on surrender to krishna and vairAGYa, two forms of Brahman, kruShNa and nirguNa.

Devotional and Works: Authenticity doubtful

1. nirguNa mAnas pUja
2. Siva mAnas pUja
3. subramaNya bhujangam - Mentioned by kAnchi paramAcArya as authentic
4. EkAshloki
5. gaNeSa pancratnam
6. gaNeSa bhUjangam - Mentioned by KAnchi ParamAcArya as authentic
7. *and many more ...*

Many other popular works are not included in the list of authentic works by western scholars and non-advaitins. Vani Vilas Press has published Complete Works of Sri Adi Shankaracharya' in 1910, under the guidance of Shringeri Shankaracharya. Advaita-vedanta.org has listed them here

Official website of Kachi Kamakoti Math, www.kamakoti.org lists some more works. They can be found here and here.

It includes gaNeSa bhUjangam and gaNeSa pancratnam

Some works not mentioned here are accepted by Shringeri Math. This means that the authentic lineage accepts these works.

Appendix - More details about Saints

Some more details of selected saints.

annamAcArya

Sri Tallapaka Annamacharya (1408-1503) the mystic saint composer of the 15th century is the earliest known musician of South India to compose songs called "sankIrtanas" in praise of Lord Venkateswara. Annamcharya is believed to be the incarnation of Lord Venkateswara's. nandaka (Sword). He lived for 94 years.

Annamayya became Annamacharya when the sage Ghana Vishnu at Tirumala converted him into a Vaishnavaite (Srivaishnava) at the age of 8.

During his long and prolific career, Annamacharya composed and sang 32,000 Sankirtanas, 12 Satakas (sets of hundred verses), Ramayana in the form of Dwipada,SsankIrtana Lakshanam (Characteristics of sankIrtanas), Sringaara Manjari, and Venkatachala Mahatmamyam. His works were in Telugu, Sanskrit and a few other languages of India.

Chinnanna called the 32,000 Sankirtanas as 32,000 Mantras or Sacred Hymns. It was also recorded in Chinnanna's Dwipada that Purandara Dasa, who was 70 years younger to Annamacharya, heard about the miracles of Annamacharya and visited him. Purandara Dasa paid his respects to Annamacharya by calling him the incarnation of Lord Venkateswara and his Sankirtanas as Sacred Hymns.

Mahavatar Babaji

It is well known through Autobiography of a Yogi, by Paramhansa Yogananda that Mahavatar Babaji is more than 1800 years old and has transformed his entire body into light. Babaji has conquered death. Mahavtar Babaji revived Kriya Yoga through Lahiri Mahashaya. He is an example of what mind is capable of.

Swami Vivekananda

Swami Vivekananda had unusual capacity of intense mental concentration and followed Strict Brahmacharya

Here is an excerpt between Swami Vivekananda and his disciple (Sharatchandra Chakravarti)

Once Swami Vivekananda was reading the volumes of 'Encyclopedia Britannica'. His disciple associate (Sharatchandra Chakravarti), seeing those twenty-four volumes, remarked, "It is difficult to master the contents of so many volumes in one life." He did not know at the time that the Swami had already finished ten volumes and was reading the eleventh. "What do you mean?" said Swamiji. "Ask me whatever you like from those ten volumes and I can tell you all about it." The disciple, out of curiosity, brought down the books and asked Swamiji many questions on difficult and varied topics/subjects,

selecting one or two from different volumes. Swami Vivekananda not only replied each correctly, but in many instances he quoted the very language of the books!

At another time, Swami Vivekananda happened to turn the pages of a book in quick succession just by looking at them once. The disciple asked as to what Swamiji was doing. Swami Vivekananda replied, "Why, I am reading the book." The fellow was utterly surprised to see such an odd method of reading the book! Then Swami Vivekananda explained just as a child reads every letter of a word, most of adults read a cluster of words or a full sentence, "I can read paragraph to paragraph"! Thus, three glances and the whole page used to be read!

Later he greatly emphasized to cultivate power of mind in the form of purity and concentration for spiritual gains, so also perfection in many arts and studies in science and other branches of education.

It has to be noted that prior to this conversation, the disciple was thinking, "Despite his spare food and scanty sleep, Swamiji is very active.

Source: Reminiscences of Swami Vivekananda

Sriram Sharma Acharya

Same was the case with Sriram Sharma Acharya. Those who lived in close proximity with Pt.Shriram Sharma Acharya know that he would read through multiple large texts in a short span of time and remember it all.

Pt. Shriram Sharma Acharya wrote Literature greater than his own body weight. All his texts are scientific in content and research validated. How was this possible in a time when internet was absent ?

About Shriram Sharma it is well known that he did not know English, yet when he used to write, he would ask for a pile of English books from the library at night, and by morning he had read them all, and marked out the pages which he wanted to be referenced in the article he was writing. Such were his Yogic powers.

The Gayatri Pariwar fraternity with its more 3000 social reform centers (Shakti-peeths) are his greatest contributions to the modern world.

He translated the entire Vedic Vangmaya (4 Vedas, 108 Upanishads, 18 Puranas) in hindi and accomplished a feat of **writing more than 3000 books on all aspects of life.** (source)

Since Sriram Sharma Acharya is relatively new figure born on 20th September 1911 and voluntarily shed his physical sheath on Gayatri Jayanti, 2nd June 1990, there must have been many fact finders who would have spotted this claim of writing over 3000 titles and translating Vedic Vangmaya. No such objection is raised by anyone. Again, he not only did write books, but was actively spreading his mission all over the world. Sriram Sharma Acharya had lived for 80 years Even if we take one-third (1/3rd) part of his life, i.e. 27

years and works it would mean 1000 centers and 1000 titles. Even if we reduce them to half, this would mean 500 centers and 500 works in 27 years. Adi Shankara didnt write commentaries on veda-s and PurANa-s which are voluminous works. Prasthantrayi is much shorter as compared to Veda-s and PurANa-s. It should be noted that Sriram Sharma Acharya was not an avatar. It is said that 450 works are attributed to Sri Adi Shankaracharya. From above, we can understand that such claim is not altogether bogus and is very much within the reach of an avatar, be it a partial Incarnation of Lord Dakshinamurthy, or Shiva or born by blessings of Lord Shiva. This is not to say that all works attributed to him are genuine. The attempt is being made that such a feat is not unachievable.

Valmiki

When Valmiki cursed a hunter who killed two loving birds, the curse came in the form of poetry. Valmiki was not a poet, but since he was chosen by the supreme God to author the great epic, Ramayana, he was given this gift. When the Lord makes us an instrument and entrusts us some work, he will also give us ability to complete the task. Similarly in case of Adi Shankara, he did not want to enter into debates, he did not want to spread advaita, he did not wanted to write commentary on Brahma Sutra, but it was upon the order of Lord, once as Lord Shiva and at another time as Bhagavan Ved Vyas. It is with their blessings that Adi Shankara was able to fulfill their work.

REFERENCES CITED BY ADI SHANKARA IN HIS BHASHYA ON VISHNU SAHASRANAMA

For personal Reference, I have noted page numbers of Vishnu Sahasranama - Shankar Bhashya, Hindi translation by Gita Press, Reprinted in 2013 (Vikram Samvat 2069). Page numbers of the uploaded version on scribd may differ, as the version uploaded is very old. Many shastras are quoted multiple times. I have not collected each citation. At few places I have also noted down verse numbers that I found of interest.

References (Combined)

Not all may refer Translation by Gita Press. Hence for easy reference and coping, I have collected all references in list form.

1. Linga Purana
2. Garuda Purana
3. Skanda Purana
4. Brihad Naradiya Purana (Narada Purana)
5. Bhavishyottara or Bhavishya Purana
6. Hari or Harivamsa Purana – Up-Purana
7. Vishnu Dharma or Vishnu Dharmotara Purana – Up-Purana
8. Vishnu Purana
9. Padma Purana
10. Shiva Purana
11. Brahma Purana
12. Narasimha Up-Purana
13. Mantra Upanishad
14. Kaivalya Upanishad
15. Narayana Upanishad
16. Svetashvatara Upanishad
17. Kaushitaki (Brahman) Upanishad
18. Brahma Yajnyavalkya Smriti
19. Manu Smriti
20. Atri Smriti
21. Daksha Smriti
22. Valmiki Ramayana
23. Mahabharata
24. Purush Suktam
25. Panini Sutra
26. Shukla Yajurveda
27. Aeitriya Aranyaka
28. Taitariya Samhita
29. Taitariya Brahman
30. Rig Veda

Puranas

Sr. No.	Name	Name	Page No.
1	Linga Purana	padacCeda	18, 48
2	Garuda Purana		20
3	Skanda Purana		20
4	Brihad Naradiya Purana (Narada Purana) 1.51.10		20, 258
5	Bhavishyottara or Bhavishya Purana		31
6	Hari or Harivamsa Purana – Up-Purana		18, **31**, 32, **51**
7	Vishnu Dharma or Vishnu Dharmotara Purana – Up-Purana		36, 233. 263
8	Vishnu Purana		14, 18, 31, etc
9	Padma Purana		48
10	Shiva Purana		98
11	Brahma Purana (130.18, 83.17)		143, 113, 238
12	Narasimha Up-Purana (245 - nArAyaNa)		121

Puranas: Detailed with verse nos

[under construction]

Legend:

P: padacCeda
v: verse no

Sr. No.	Name	Name	Page No.
1	Linga Purana 2.7.11	P, v10	18 48

2	Garuda Purana 1.230.28	P, v10	17 20
3	Skanda Purana		20
4	Brihad Naradiya Purana (Narada Purana) 1.51.10	P, v10	19 20, 258
5	Bhavishyottara or Bhavishya Purana		31
6	Hari or Harivamsa Purana – Up-Purana 3.89.9	P, v10	18 **31** 32 **51**
7	Vishnu Dharma or Vishnu Dharmotara Purana – Up-Purana		36, 233. 263
8	Vishnu Purana 6.2.17 6.8.20, 6.8.19 6.2.17 (same as page 14)	P, v8 P, v8 P, v8	14 18 19 31
9	Padma Purana		48
10	Shiva Purana		98
11	Brahma Purana (130.18, 83.17)		143, 113, 238
12	Narasimha Up-Purana (245 - nArAyaNa)		121

Note:

1. There is no mention of Bhagavat Purana (Srimad Bhagavatam), highly revered by Vaishnavas, which is unexpected while commenting on Vishnu Sahasranama. This may indicate that Bhagavat Purana might be written recently and Original Purana might be Devi Bhagavat. Some Scholars are of the opinion that it might be authored by Vopadeva.
2. There is a mention of Padma Purana. Version available today contains verses on 6.236.7-11 (Bengali Version) that are used to accuse him (Adi Shankara) and advaita. Later verses categorizes Puranas as Sattvik, Rajasic and Tamasic. Further the verses say that Tamasic Puranas, which eulogize Shiva, lead one to hell. If those verses were available during his time, I do not think he would have cited references from them i.e. Linga Purana and Shiva Purana. Rajasic Puranas praises Brahma, and we find Brahma Purana as Rajasic. This clearly shows that the controversial verses were absent during his time. To add to it, his direct and immediate disciples did not refuted any of the accusations against our acharya or advaita. This type of accusations cannot be ignored. Lack of refutation of his direct

disciple indicates absence of these verses during their time. It implies that the verses are interpolation. Matsya Purana contains different classification. To add to it, Padma Purana is considered as most corrupted Purana, specially the uttara Khanda. This is because there are two version available – Bengali and South Indian, each differing in content says scholars. Swiping from Sankrit to Bengali and back to Sanskrit could have been the cause of corruption. Bengalis often replace 'v' with 'b' e.g. Buddha 'Vihar' changed 'Bihar'. 'Vanga' changed to 'Benga', which got changed to 'Bengal'. 'Vanga Bandhu' changed to 'Banga Bandhu'.

3. Presence of Up-Puranas like Harivamsa and Vishnu Dharmottara indicates that Up-Puranas are important too, though the authorship is not attributed to Veda-Vyas or the authorship is disputed like in case of above up-puranas and Devi Bhagavat
4. Some doubt authenticity of Linga Purana. They believe that Shiva Purana is authentic and the main Shaiva Purana. However, contrary to popular belief, our acharya did not had same opinion. According to some scholars it is VAyu Purana, as historians find it oldest, second comes Linga Purana. However, to th best of my knowledge, our acharya has not cited VAyu Purana.

Upanishads

10 Principle Upanishads have been omitted

Sr. No.	Name	Page No.
11	Mantra Upanishad of Svetasvarata shAkhA 6.11, 6.18) Sv. Up	24
12	Kaivalya Upanishad 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 8 **(27-Shiva)**	33, **79**, 263
13	Narayana Upanishad 68 (not a part of 108 upanishads of Muktika)	56
14	Svetashvatara Upanishad **6.11**	73
15	Kaushitaki (Brahman) Upanishad	133

Smritis

Sr. No.	Name	Page No.

1	Brahma Yajnyavalkya Smriti	27
2	Manu Smriti	29
3	Atri Smriti 1.9 and 1.11	56
4	Daksha Smriti – 3.31	232

Ramanaya

Sr. No.	Name	Page No.
1	Valmiki Ramayana 1.8.18	155

Note: Valmiki Ramayana is mentioned at least 3-4 times

Mahabharata

Sr. No.	Name	Page No.
2	Mahabharat Udyog Parva – 17	45
	Vana Parva	58
	Moksha Dharma	84
	Shanti Parva	84
	Bhishma Parva	90
	Shravan Parva – 93	228
	Anu Parva 185.39 (verse quoted is different from today's version)	256

Sr. No.	Name	Page No.
	Nahush – adhogati	43-44
	Mahabharat – the fifth Veda	74
	Mahabharat is written by Ved Vyasa	86
	Mahabharat Composed by Krishna Dvaipayana Veda Vyasa, who is an avatar of Vishnu	175

Miscellaneous

Sr. No.	Name	Page No.
1	Purush Suktam	98
2	Panini Sutra	74
3	Shukla Yajurveda	195
4	Aeitriya Aranyaka	91, 211
5	Taitariya Samhita	256
6	Taitariya Brahman	263
7	Rig Veda	89

Note: Panini Sutra is mentioned at least 5-6 times, Rig Veda 2-3 times.

ADI SHANKARA PREACHED SMARTA DHARMA

Updated: 3rd Sept 2016

[beta]

Contents in Brief

smArta dharma is an ancient way of life. Before we try to understand whether Adi Sankara propogated smArta dharma or not, let us try to understand what is smArta dharma.

Since this article is very long, we will present the essence of article as briefly as possible.

This article covers basics of smArta dharma followed by proofs from our shAstra-s and quoting commentaries of Adi Sankara in support of our claim. Let us list the contents of this article.

- Smārta dharma is an ancient dharma practiced by many people
- Smārta dharma existed prior to Ādi Śankara
- Smārta dharma has sanction in veda-s
- Adi Sankara preached smārta dharma
- Proofs are given that support the claim of Adi Sankara preaching smārta dharma

In smārta dharma, Gaṇesha, Śiva, Śhakti, Viṣhṇu and Sūrya are considered as manifestations of Brahman and are equally potent. smārta dharma was not started by Ādi Śankara, but was propagated for cultural harmony of Bhārata. It is said that Ādi Ṣankara had introduced the sixth deity Bhagavān Skanda (Murugan, Kārtikeyan) for uniting north and south Indians. Bhagavān Skanda is very popular in South India. One can add the sixth deity. Generally only five deities are worshipped. In this case, any one is replaced by Skanda.

Adi Sankara was a smArta, as his parents were Siva bhakta-s, his own ISTa devatA was bhagavAn viShNu / krShNa. Our AcArya has also composed many hymns on Siva, Adi Shakti, viShNu and other forms of ISvara. Some of the independent compositions by our AcArya are:

- daxiNAmUrtI stotra, commented by SureSavarAcAya as mAnasollAsa
- Siva pancAkshara Stotra, commented by PadmapadAcharya
- dasasloki, commented by Madhusudan Sarasvati by the name Siddhanta Bindu.
- veda sAra Siva stavan, considered as authentic composition of SrI Adi Sankara
- soundarya lahiri, considered as authentic composition of SrI Adi Sankara, atleast first 41 stotra-s

- moha mudgara, popularly known as 'bhaja govindam', considered as authentic composition of SrI Adi Sankara
- mAyA pancakam says that it is mAyA who is responsible for inducing distinctions between brahmA, viShNu and Siva.

According to **smArta dharma,** when any form of ISvara is eulogized as the supreme and whenever any instance of another devatA approaches this supreme deity either for help or for praising him / her, then the sole purpose of presenting the superiority of one deity over another is for giving one-pointedness. Just to create a pUrvabhumikA, necessary for eulogizing a deity, such incidents are created out of which the glories of ISTa devatA are composed and so are the stuthi-s. Wise say that even if we digest even one stuti from bhAgavat purANa, it is enough for us. gajendra got moxa (moksha) in 8 days and after that from his heart the stuti came. Since ISvara resides in our heart and the stuti comes effortlessly from our heart it is ISvara himself who is inspiring us to surrender to him / her. Even if we consider some characters as fictitious, the stuti was created by rishi-s in trance, in state of ecstasy who were soaked in divine love. These soul stirring stuti-s, according to the wise, are capable enough for giving us the darSan of our beloved ISTa devatA.

This approach of revering all forms of ISvara as different manifestations of same Brahman leads to **nAhi-nindA nyAya**. In this nyAya, we believe that superiority of one form of ISvara over another is just for the sake of giving one-pointedness and so we do not denigrate the status of any form of ISvara who plays the role of ignorant or helpless. More than stories, it is the moral of the stories and the nectar of GYAna and bhakti that are given to us for our own spiritual progress are considered as prime and so are focused.

To the name of our Āchārya, Srī Ādi Śankara, the word 'Bhagavadpāda' is added out of reverence. 'pāda' or 'pada' means feet, Bhagavad-pāda means the one who has attained the lotus feet of Bhagavān. Hence it is foolish to say that bhakti is not needed in advaita.

To understand that Adi Sankara bhagavapAda preached smārta dharma and he didn't differentiate between ṣiva, viShNu, and sūrya we will consider commentaries from following shāstra-s and his independent compositions

- viShNu sahasranāma (VSN) Sankara bhāshya - padacCeda (intro and beginning verses), names #27 Siva, #114 rudra #505 soma indicating ṣiva-viShNu abheda
- viShNu sahasranāma ṣankara bhāshya names #231 ahaḥsaṃvartakaḥ, #553 varuṇaḥ, #648 kēṣava, #883 sūrya indicate non-duality between viShNu and sūrya
- viShNu sahasranāma ṣankara bhāshya name #943 laxmI, says that laxmI is atma-vidyA, hence, it indicates non-duality between viShNu and laxmI
- In adhyAsa bhASya - intro of brahma sUtra bhASya our AchArya does not say that brahma sUtra is about establishing viShNu supremacy or does it is about indicating viShNu as the sole supreme brahman. Our AchArya does not name any particular form of deity, but says it is all about adhyAropa-apavAda, i.e. removal of ignorance.
- In kena upanishad bhASya 3.12. our AchArya reconfirms that umA (haimAvatI) is the knower of brahma-vidyA and hence she is inseparable indicating non-difference between Siva and shakti.

- In BrihadAraNyaka Upanishad bhAshya 1.4.11-12, 3.9.4, prashna Upanishad 2.9 and kaivalya Upanishad 8 (cited By Adi Sankara in VSN bhAshya), Adi Sankara explains two types of rudra-s - a) created demi-god and b) Supreme Brahman. Both are different entities.
- In bhagavad gItA bhASya 9.25, AchArya has not used the word 'vinAyaka' and 'mAtrikA' for 'gaNesha' and 'good mAtrikA-s'. Clarification of the use of vinAyaka-s and mAtrikA-s (taken in plural form) in anya-devata verse
- In bhagavad gItA bhASya 11.15, no translation of 'ISA' to Siva / rudra. ब्रह्माणमीशं कमलासनस्थ (brahmāṇamīśaṅ kamalāsanastha-) is translated as 'bhagavAn brahmA-ji, seated on Lotus' and not as interpreted by rAmAnuja i.e. 'Siva sitting on lap of BrahmA (as Siva is born from brahmA), who is sitting in lotus'.
- Various references from viveka chuDAmaNi, saundarya lahiri and other grantha-s, devotional hymns are taken in order to prove non-difference between gaNesha-Siva-shakti-viShNu-sUrya the five deities worshipped in smArta dharma.

Lets begin with the the article with references to various Sankara bhASya-s to support our claim:

SrI Adi Sankara bhagavadpAda has written a commentary on SrI viShNu sahasranAma bhASya. In the intro (padaCheda), our AcArya has shown Siva-viShNu abheda.

*Adi Sankara quotes **viShNu purANa 6.7.16** and says,*

In viShNu purANa, it is said, 'after the destruction of ignorance, which creates duality, who is going to differentiate between AtmA and brahman, which is always asatya (unreal)?

Adi Sankara bhagavatpAda further enlightens us that, when is it said, 'I am you **and** you are me', then it confirms non-duality. e.g. if viShNu bhagavAn says that I am Siva', but Siva never says that 'I am viShNu', then one can understand that Siva is a part of viShNu, but when viShNu says, 'I am you and you are me', then it confirms non-duality. In the same way, at one instance, viShNu says 'I am Siva, brahmA, etc' and in a separate instance / place, Siva says, 'I am viShNu, brahmA, etc', then this too confirms non-duality. Hence when we find verses like, 'Thou art that [brahman], Svetaketu', then this confirms non-duality. Upanishads always say that there is only one brahman, mostly in the beginning of upanishads. Then this brahman entered into the bodies (universe, different worlds)

In this context, verses from viShNu purANa and harivamSa purANa are quoted.

VP 5.33.47-49: [Sri kRShNacandra says to mahAdeva ji-] The abhayadAna (boon of being fearless or invincible) given by you implies that it is given by me too. **He Sankara! [please] do not see yourself as different from me. That which I am [i.e. that which is my true nature] is also you [your true nature]** and so are other devatA-s [true nature of other devatA-s], asura-s (demons) and this whole universe including

humans. Only those humans whose citta (mind, heart) is influenced by ignorance, they see duality (see everything with bhedabhAva)

Similarly in bhaviSyottara purANa mahadeva ji says - **those who sees me, or brahmA ji different than viShNu, those kutarka-buddhi muDhajana (those ignorant fools having bad logical reasoning) fall below in naraka (hell) and suffer sorrow. And those with duShTa-buddhi (corrupted-intellect / defective intellect), those ignorant fools see I and brahmA ji different from viShNu, they incur sin equivalent to brahma-hatyA (killing of a brAhmaNa, a priest)**

Similarly, in harivanSa [purANa] 3.88.51, maheSavara ji says - you [viShNu] are in the beginning, middle and end of all bhAva (beings). This whole universe has originated from you only **and** also ends in you only.

(AcArya ji continues to quote harivamSa purANa 3.88.60-64)

he janArdana! O omnipresent deva! I am you and you are me. In all three worlds, there is no different (bheda) between us either by Sabda (word) or by artha (meaning).

he govinda! in this world whatever great names are yours are mine too - there is no need to think on this (i.e. there is no doubt about this).

he gopate! (kruShNa), he jagannAtha!, let the worship of yours be mine

he deva! [it goes without saying that] those who dislike / hate you also dislike / hate me. There is no doubt about it.

Source: viShNu sahasranAma, Sankara bhASya, pages 31-35, Gita press, Gorakhpur, Hindi translation.

Later, while explaining the names or attributes 27 Siva and 114 rudra, AcArya has once again established Siva-viShNu abheda.

Siva-viShNu abheda in viShNu saharanAma

27 शिव Siva -The one who is pure because of absence or transcending of three guNa-s (in him) is called as Shiva. 'He is Brahma, He is Shiva' (Kaivalya. Up. 1.8), in this way, by

showing non-difference (अभेद) between them (all three), by praising the name of Shiva, etc, it is the praise of Hari (Vishnu)

114 रूद्र rudra - ... from a devotee's standpoint the same term is interpreted as the One who liquidated all sorrows is Rudrah. Or **it may mean that The cause of sorrow (cry) and driving it away is called as Rudra. Siva PurANa says that, 'The name Rudra is the cause of Dukha (sorrow) i.e. dukhaka, because, the Lord removes [1] the sorrow or the cause (hetu)[2] of sorrow, that is why, the cause of everything (परमकारण (ParamkAraNa) Lord Shiva is called as Rudra.**

Notes:

[1]Here 'the Lord removes' can be taken as 'the Lord uproots'
[2] हेतु (hetu) means intention, motive, reason, purpose or even an object. Here it has to be taken as cause

505 सोमः somaH -In the form of soma (chandra, moon), the one who develops medicines is called as soma. Or by being (staying) with umA [1] is soma is SivasvarUpa.

sUrya-viShNu abheda in viShNu sahasranAma

648 केशवः keshava - *(trinity are rays or powers of brahman who is sūryadeva)*

Rays spread within sūrya are called as keshava (kēṣava). By getting associated (combined) with them (rays), Bhagavān is called as keshava. In Mahābhārata it is said that - 'my rays that shine (prakāshita) are called as kesha. Hence all-knower (sarvaGYa), best amongst dvija-s call me Kēṣava'. **Or the powers by the names Brahmā, Vīṇu, (viShNu) and ṣiva are kēṣa. By associating with them Bhagavān is Kēṣava. shruti says, 'having three kēṣa-s' and ' my two kēṣa-s (powers) are within privthi (earth) - VP 5.1.61) - in this statement, the word 'kēṣa' is used as an alternative for the word 'ṣakti'.** In Harivamṣa 3.88.48 [Mahādevajī] says, " 'ka' (क) represents Brahmā and I am the Lord of all living beings. We both have originated from your part i.e. we are partial manifestations of you [Vīṇu], hence you are called by the name Kēṣava'.

Note: *In the name #23 Kēṣava, proper splitting of the word kēṣava is given. The word is split into 'ka', 'a', 'ṣa' and 'va'. These words are representatives of Brahmā, Viṇu, ṣiva and paramātmān respectively. Hence we can understand that keshava is the supreme*

brahman, different from the trinity who are his powers, which are called as 'kēṣa' and are represented by 'rays' meaning rays of Sun. Sun is also mapped with supreme brahman and it's creative, preservative and destructive energies are it's māyā or female counter part or dynamic counterpart.

881 रविः ravi - *(Sūrya Bhagavān is ravi)* - Bhagavān sūrya is called as ravi as [bhagavān sūrya] is holds or accepts all the rasa-s. In Vishnu dharmottara it is said, 'By grasping or absorbing all the rasa-s [he] is called as ravi'.

883 Sūrya - *(Sūryadeva)* - Since [he] gives birth to shrī [shobhā, Sun rays] hence Sūrya or Agnī is called as 'Sūrya'...

Note:
1) Sūryadeva is called as the creator or origin of Shrī. Here, Shrī is taken as shobhā. shobhā means, light, brilliance, splendour, yellow pigment or yellowish like turmeric. Here, shobhā means 'Sun rays'. Earlier, in the name #648 keshava, trinity is said to be the rays or powers of Bhagavān Sūrya, who represents parabrahman.

laxmI-viShNu abheda in viShNu sahasranAma

943 लक्ष्मी Laxmī - *(Laxmīdevī is ātma-svarūpa)* ... but is also Laxmī meaning ṣhobhā is also him (one and same tatvam) only, hence is called as Laxmī. Or 'Bhūḥ' (भूः) of Bhūrkolaka & 'bhuvaḥ' (भुवः) and ātmavidyā (Self Knowledge or Knowledge of Self Realisation), is called as [is known by the name or tatvam] 'Laxmī' only. In Shruti, it is said that - 'O devi ! ātmavidyā is you only'. Or you are the shobhā (splendour, brilliance i.e. power, shakti) of earth and space (bhumi and antariksha), hence Bhagavān Bhūrbhuvaḥ is Laxmī.

Note: *Here our Ācharya has cited non-difference between Knowledge of Self Realisation i.e. Laxmī and Bhagavān i.e. The Supreme Brahman. Just like there is non-difference between ṣiva and ṣakti, there is also non-difference between Viṣhṇu and Laxmī. We can find non-difference in Kena Upanishad 3.12 where our Ācharya has cited non-difference between vidyā i.e. ātma-vidyā Umā (Haimāvatī, the daughter of Himālaya) and Brahman. In adhyāsa bhashya, our Ācharya has said the same thing, Ignorance is the rōt cause and*

removal of Ignorance by atma-jnāna is Knowledge. Knower of Ātman is nothing but Ātman itself.

OM (nirAkAra, nirguNa brahman) - viShNu abheda in viShNu sahasranAma

957 प्रणव (ॐ) praṇava - *(Formless, Attributeless Brahman OM)*

Is the monosyllable word 'OM' 'ॐ'. Is one with or is non-different from OM, hence is called as praṇava itself.

Note: *Here the non-difference between Bhagavān and formless OM. OM leads one to Nirvikalp Samādhi.*

We can conclude that Adi Sankara considered Siva-Viṣhṇ-Sūrya-LaxmI abheda.

AcArya has also cited as many as 12 purANa-s including Siva, skanda, brahmANDa, etc and up-purANa-s indicating that all purANa-s are equally divine and authoritative and valid means of realize the supreme reality. Since shruti or Mahābhārata does not have three fold classificaton of itself being divided into sātvika, rājasika and tāmasika, those verses in Padma Purāṇa are rejected.

In his **adhyAsa bhASya**, which is an intro to his iBrahma Sūtra Bhāṣhya, there is no mention of establishing supremacy or equating Vīṣhṇu as brahman. Ignorance is considered as root cause and hence it has to be removed and the Sun of knowledge will shine by itself without any effort on our part, after the veil of cloud representing ignorance is removed or dispelled.

In kena upanishad commentary 3.12 too, AcArya has indicated that Siva is brahman and umA is an embodiment of GYAna i.e. vidyA.

In pada bhasya, it is said (in hindi), उमारुपिणि - स्त्रीवेशधारिणी उमारुपा विद्यादेवी meaning 'of the form of umA- who had taken the form of female, goddess of knowledge (i.e. knowledge itself) in the form of umA. Further it says, knowledge (vidya) is the most auspicious (शोभायमान), as knowledge is the most auspicious.

In vākya-bhāṣya, it contains the word हैमवती (haimavatI) and it is said, She always stays

in communion with all-knowledgeable ISvara (sarvaGYa ISvara), hence, [she] will be fully knowledgeable in that GYAna (knowledge).

In other words, knowledge, in the form of goddesss umA, pArvatI, the daughter of mountain himAlaya, is always with all-knowledgeable ISvara [bhagavAn Siva who is knowledge itself, the brahman] and hence she, pArvatI-devI, is fully established in knowledge [indicating non-difference between both Siva and pArvatI]

It is interesting to know that ISvara, bhagavAn Siva has three Sakti-s,

1. iCCA Sakti - power of intention, will
2. vidyA Sakti - power of knowledge *and*
3. kriyA Sakti - the power of action or the power to act

Thus, it can be concluded that

- Uma, Haimavati means Maa Parvati, consort of Lord Shiva
- She appears in the form of lady and she is of the form of vidya (vidya-svarupa)
- She knows the truth (later she tells the truth that this was brahman who vanished)
- To stay with sarvaGYa Ishvara means to be with Lord Shiva --> Knowledge stays with Lord. They both cannot be separated. Jnana-svarupa.
- Though Adi Sankara has not used the word 'Shiva' or 'Rudra', he has made reference to Lord Shiva, Siva and Sakti are inseparable.

In bhagavad gItA 9.25, our AcArya has written words 'vinAyaka' and 'mAtrikA' among other names which are not to be meditated upon. Some think that this vinAyaka is none other than pArvatI nandan 'gaNeSa' and the mAtrikA-s are none other than those who took care of Siva pUtra 'skanda'. Wise have interpreted both names in plural forms i.e. 'vinAyaka-s' and 'mAtrikA-s'. These are life forms higher than humans, but lower than devatA-s (demi-Gods). The plural forms are mentioned in bhAgavat purANa 10.63.10-11 and 10.63.27-29. Hence taking both terms as plural is acceptable. Swami Sivananda of Divine Life Society has also clarified on this issue that the 'vinAyaka' is to be taken as plural i.e. 'vinAyaka.h'.

In bhagavad gItA 11.15, our AcArya, unlike other commentators, has not denigrated the status of Siva by translating the word ISAn as ISvara only and not 'Siva'

In the verse, ब्रह्माण**मीशं** कमलासनस्थ (brahmāṇam**īśaṁ** kamalāsanastha), 'ISAn' is in continuation of the word brahmA and is in between 'brahmA' and 'kamala'. Hence the word 'ISAn' is interpreted as 'Lord' or 'ISvara' which is an epitome of brahmA-ji, as he is the creator of the universe and so has lordship over it. brahmāṇam**īśaṁ** means Lord brahmA and the meaning of verse is 'bhagavAn brahmA-ji, seated on Lotus'

अर्जुन उवाच

पश्यामि देवांस्तव देव देहे
सर्वांस्तथा भूतविशेषसङ्घान्।
ब्रह्माणमीशं कमलासनस्थ-
मृषींश्च सर्वानुरगांश्च दिव्यान्।।11.15।।

11.15 पश्यामि (I) see, देवान् the gods, तव Thy, देव O God, देहे in the body, सर्वान् all, तथा also, भूतविशेषसङ्घान् hosts of various classes of beings, ब्रह्माणम् Brahma, **ईशम् the Lord**, कमलासनस्थम् seated on the lotus, ऋषीन् sages, च and, सर्वान् all, उरगान् serpents, च and, दिव्यान् divine.

English translation by Swami Gambhirananda

11.15 Arjuna said -- O God, I see in Your body all the gods as also hosts of (various) classes of beings; Brahma the ruler, sitting on a lotus seat, and all the heavely sages and serpents.

English translation by Swami Gambhirananda (on Sri Sankaracharya's Sanskrit Commentary)

11.15 Deva, O God, I see, perceive in Your body all the gods as also hosts of (various) classes of beings, groups of moving and non-moving living things having different shapes; and **besides, Brahma, with four faces, the Ruler of creatures, sitting on a lotus seat**, i.e. sitting on Mount Meru which forms the pericarp of the lotus that is the earth and all the heavenly sages-Vasistha and others and (the heavenly) serpents-Vasuki and others.

On a personal note, this translation of not interpreting 'ISAn' as 'Siva' seems logical as the verse continues to describe brahmadeva, who is seated on lotus.

Other prominent AcArya's like madhusudan sarasvatI and appaya dikxita (Dikshita) has praised both Siva and viShNu in independent composition or by writing commentaries on popular hymns. SrI madhusudan sarasvatI (MS) has written a scholarly commentary on Siva mahimna stotra. The uniqueness of the commentary is that MS has interpreted each verse in hymn to eulogize both Siva and kruShNa. MS has clearly indicated that the sole of this composition is to promote Siva-viShNu abheda.

To further add, there are panca-deva-atharvaSiSha-s of all five vedic deities worshiped in smArta dharma. Since smArta dharma is purely based on shruti and smriti-s and it does

not depend upon the Agama-s for a particular siddhAnta (philosophy) hence it is a pUrNa vedic dharma, fully or purely vedic dharma.

We have described in brief that Adi Sankara and hence advaita consider Siva-viShNu abheda. The reason for eulogizing only viShNu as the brahman in prasthAntrayI bhASya indicates one-pointed devotion to his ISTa-devatA and in no way denigrates the status of Siva.

For those who are convinced, there is no reason to read further. Those who like to further understand Siva-viShNu abheda, as preached by Adi Sankara, and for detailed explanation and for gaining more proofs may continue to read.

Adi Sankara Preached Smarta Dharma

Some believe that Adi Shankara and the present advaitins are all Shaiva-s. All 5 Advaita Matha-s wear Vibhuti-s and daily perform ChandramaUleSvara PujA. Based on the commentaries on PrasthAntrayi, many believe that Adi Shankara did not preach Smarta Dharma, as the ideology is not reflected in his commentaries. To add to it, many hymms attributed to him, which praise other deities like Devi (Shakti), Ganesha, Shiva are considered of dubious authenticity. Others claim that Adi Shankara was a Vaishnava who only equated Vishnu with Brahman.

Typically, Adi Shankara was Vaishnava, Shaiva, Shakta all at a time by being an advaitin. He was not exclusively devoted to any one deity and did not preached worshiping only one deity. So he was neither a Vaishnava, nor Shaiva nor a Shakta. Later on, we will find reference from his works supporting his claim.

First let us understand who are smArta-s.

Smarta and Shanmata

smArta-s are the ones who follow Smriti-s. Smriti-s are called as notes from memory. What is being recalled from memory? They are Veda-s. Great Rishi-s who had mastered Veda-s noted down from their memory 18 Smriti-s. People following injunctions of Smriti-s are called SmArta-s. People following directly veda-s are called Shrauta-s. Smriti-s deal with moral and ethical conduct, have some rules that are to be followed for peaceful and harmonious living. Since Smriti-s are derived from Shruti-s (veda-s), they are considered as second in authority. Since they comply veda-s, and are derived from them, SmArta-s too abide by Veda-s. Hence any pramAna (evidence of proof) found in either Smriti-s or Shruti-s, cannot be discarded or overlooked.

smArta-s daily perform Panchayatna Puja. Panchyatna puja or panch dev puja includes worship of Ganesh, Shiva, Shakti, Vishnu and Surya. Some are of opinion that this system of worship is being practiced before the time of Adi Shankara. Adi Shankara may not be the originator of this system, but he was definitely it's preacher. Adi Shankara was a Jagadguru. **Adi Shankara added the sixth deity Skanda to the five to unite people all over India. Worshipping 6 deities is called as Shanmata.**

In Panch Dev Puja, each deity has a variant of Gayatri mantra sanctioned by Vedas says Kanchi Paramacharya. We find many variants of Gayatri mantra in Maha Narayana Upanishad.

We have Atharvashirsha-s of all 5 deities, which are a part of Atharva veda. In Atharvashirsha-s each deity is eulogized as supreme.

Panchdev Atharvashirsha Sangrah published by Gita Press in Sanskrit-Hindi is available here

We have Purusha Suktam, Sri Suktam, Sri Rudram and many other hymms dedicated to different deities.

SmArtas were all Advaitins according to Kanchi Paramacharya. Advaita has a place for all forms of God and for all vedic philosophies. Adi Shankara has accepted all upto a point and then asked us to rise above it, as it is not the final destination. It is said that Adi Shankara did not create any new sampradAya. Hence calling his philosophy and Shankara's Advaita would not be correct. The reason for Advaita and SmArta being ancient could be found out from certain facts.

Some Personal Thoughts

SmArta-s regard Veda-s as supreme authority. Since Ishvara has created ours and many other worlds, we have to humbly respect his creation. To govern his creation, has given authority and power to certain devatA-s. Lord has the supreme Lord has revealed us veda-s, which are his breath and has asked us to worship devatA-s and offer oblations to them in a way and form that are acceptable to them. It is our duty to respect devatA-s who are a superior race than us, humans. While performing vedic yagna-s, we have to invoke Agni deva (Fire Lord), who then will take our oblations to all other devatA-s and the Trinity. It is customary to invoke first Lord GaNesha before starting any yagna to remove the obstacles. If we argue that Lord Krishna or Lord Shiva is the Lord of all and nothing is beyond his capacity to grant us what we need and there is nothing that he cannot give, so I will only and only worship by beloved Lord. If I argue in this way, then even though I am technically right, we have to respect the creation of Lord and have to work in a way that he wants us to work. Devata-s help us maintain ecosystem. It is by their grace that we get suitable climate, suitable rain and seasons. We have not reached inner purity to an extend that our Guru thinks us fit for karma-sanyAsa. Hence we have to keep following veda-s and worship devatA-s and offer our oblations to them. Some say it is a sin to worship anya-devatA. I would not agree with this. Agreeing would mean an insult to our beloved Lord, as everything works according to his will. After gaining inner purity, upanishads asks us to renounce kAmya karma i.e. renounce agni meaning vedic rights.

We should not forget that Gita is a Moksha SAStra and not dharma SAStra. Hence Gita also asks us to renounce all karma-s and duties and surrender to the Lord. But this upadesha is given in chapter 18, which is Moksha SanyAs YOga (BG 18.66). As the name suggests and from the commentary of our AchArya, we know that one has to renounce vedic rites. We also have to renounce dharma (righteousness, meritorious deeds) and a-dharma (wrong deeds, sinful deeds). Bhagavan in BG 7.3 says - *Among thousands of men, one perchance strives for perfection; even among those successful strivers, only one perchance knows Me in essence (tatva).* Hence we can conclude that only a few have such inner purity to renounce vedic rites and become sanyAsin-s, rest all have to perform vedic rites and follow dharma.

Let us now continue to understand who Adi Shankara was.

Following are the words of Kanchi Paramacharya in the sections - Adi Shankara Bhagavadpada was not a Shaiva / Vaishnava

Adi Shankara Bhagavadpada was not a Shaiva, nor a Vaishnava, nor a Shakta

Kanchi Paramacharya has given us the explanation of Advaita and SmArta Dharma. Please visit the below link for more details

Sankara SampradAyam

though the entire writeup is very useful, articles related to our topic are found on pages Page 13 and 14

smArta - a PUrNa vaidika dharma

To continue the above discussion, only a SmArta dharma or sampradAya is pUrNa vEdic dharma, as it does not denigrate any other deites to claim the supremacy of the chosen deity.

Please find some notes in brief. Original content is found on the same source, i.e. Shankara SAmpradAya, page 14

This is one of cardinal principles of the vEdic religion known as smArthA matham. While denigrating the other deity, if one's dEvathA is claimed to be 'the' dEvathA,

then it can not be considered to have the acceptance of vEdA. Going by this test, only we - the smArthAs, who follow the AchAryAl alone are 'pUrna vaidIkAs'.

I don't say thus. It is wrong, if I say so. It may appear as though I'm talking quite high of it, because it is my sampradhAyam. Therefore, this is not my opinion.

Even the opinion of the mUla purushA of dvaithins, advaitins and vishistAdvaitins - vyAsa maharshi Himself- was this. In the anusAsana parvA of Bharatham {Mahabharata}, when He lists out the names of five mathams, that were in existence from time immemorial, through BhIshma pithAmahar, He says,

sAnkhyam yOga: pAncha rAthram vEdhA: pAshupatham thathA:

In these, 'vEdhA:' is the vEdic religion; smArtha matham of later days. It contains arAdhana for all dEvathAs. The triad of karma- bhakthi- gyAna also is there [*in the vEdic religion*]. The school of thought which does the philosophical research, the sAnkhyA, is also a part of that. Even the yOga sAdhana is a part of vEdic dhAyanA. All these things do exist in the smArthA sampradhAyam also, which was rejuvenated by our AchAryAl.

In works such as SivAnandha lahari, Soundharya lahari and shatpathI sthOthram which is addressed towards srI MahA vishnU, even our advaitha AchAryAl has accepted dvaitA and vishistAdvaitha at different levels. In His 'yOga thArAvali', He has completely elaborated the nuances of Pathanjala yOga. Also, He has mentioned the twenty four 'thathvAs' of sAnkhyA, at many places, in His bhAshyAs.

Out of the five [*schools*] mentioned by VyAsar {Veda Vyasa}, the **remaining two apart from vEdA, sAnkhyA and yOgA are pAncharAthram and pAshupatham**.

In pAncharAthram, Vishnu alone is identified as the God; while in pAshupatham, only SivA is seen as the God. These schools denigrate other deities and hold only specific deities as the supreme Godhead.

As though VyasAchAryA {Veda Vyasa} was of the opinion that these two schools are non-vEdic in nature, He has mentioned the vEdha matham separetly as 'vEdhA:', and grouped these two as sampradhAyams, differening from vEdAs, by making a separate mention as 'pAncharAthram, pAshupatham'. Sankhyam is a mere philosophical speculation (thathva-vAdham) only. In that, there is neither karmA; nor bhakti; nor any means to the experience of gyAna. Though yOgA is a school held in very high esteem, there is no scope for vaidhIka upAsanA and karma in it. Even with regards to gyAna, there is not so much clear exposition about the 'paramAthma thathvam', as it is in upanishads.

As these four schools are 'apUrnam' in one way or the other, He has distinguished them from the complete (pUrna) vEdA [*matham*], which possesses all the [*positive*] aspects of these schools, by naming them separately.

Notes:

1. Words in square Brackets are that of the translator
2. Words in curly Brackets are of the author of this website.

Did smArta dharma exist prior to Adi Sankara?

Yes, smArta dharma existed prior to Adi Sankara. Adi sankara had completed his commentaries on prasthAntraya at the age of 16. brahma sUtra is the topmost canonical text and hence it was the last one which was commented by Adi Sankara after the order and blessings of Lord Siva. **In gItA bhASya, BG 2.10, Adi Sankara mentions the words 'smArta' and 'shruta'. Hence we can understand that this worship existed prior to him.**

gaNeSa gItA, part of gaNeSa purANa mentioned pancayatna pUja. **Sri nilakanThAcArya / srikAntAcArya (both are same person), a great SaivAcArya / SivAcArya has written a tikA on SrI gaNeSa gItA.** Hence gaNeSa gItA is authentic.

This gItA is non-sectarian, as in chapter 1, verse 20, it describes all five devatA-s worshipped in pancayatna pUjA as confirmed by SrI nilakanTha in his tikA on sloka 1.20.

gaNeSa gItA says

Any yoga involving a fixed mind resting on Siva, Visnu, Shakti, Surya and on me (Ganesha), protector of men, is the right yoga in my opinion. 1.20
I alone, having taken various forms, create, protect and destroy the world for my own play. 1.21
I alone am Maha Visnu, I alone am Sadasiva, I alone am the great Shakti, I alone am Aryaman, dear one. 1.22

Adi Shankara's Parents were Shiva bhakta-s

Adi Shankara in his Gita BhASya 18.41 says that varNa is by guNa but guNa is inherited by birth. This is the opinion of Vaishnava Acharya-s like RAmAnuja, Shreedhar Svami, etc. Hence it is not possible that Adi Shankara would have betrayed his own svadharma. Even after taking sanyAsa, Adi shankara would never denigrate Shiva and consider him as 'jiva' as some Vaishnava-s are of the opinion.

We know that AchArya has commented on Tai. Up. 1/11 about 'satyam vada, dharma cara'. Words of great AchArya cannot be mere philosophy. They live the very life they preach. Hence it is illogical to say that Adi Shankara did not consider Shiva as Supreme Brahman.

So if Adi Sankara's parent were Saivas, and if ISTa deva of Adi Sankara was viShNu, then this points to only one thing - Adi Sankara was a smArta.

Each Form of God has Distinctive Characteristics

All forms of Gods are equally potent. It is not that Vishnu cannot remove ignorance and give us Jnana, but each form of Lord has a distinctive characteristic.

- Brahma = creative power - rajasic, create the universe
- Vishnu = preservative power - sattva (sattva preserves), responsibility to protect and preserve universe
- Shiva = destruction of world, ego, ignorance, three states of consciousness, tamas guNa, matted locks, three eyed, the one holding trident, uma-pati, blue throat, wearing elephant skin, etc
- Ganesh = Removal of obstacles
- Durga / Amba = Shakti or kundalini
- Sarasvati = Knowledge
- Laxmi = wealth (material and spiritual wealth which is knowledge)
- Kali = Destruction of demonic qualities
- Skanda = lord of war
- Hanuman = Bhakti, courage, valour, fight against ghosts, etc
- Rama = Maryada purushottam
- Krishna = *Akarshanam iti krishna*, Krishna is *Prem lahiri, anand lahiri, saundarya lahiri* = wave of attraction

and so on

Lord Ganesh can grant moksha, but his distinctive quality is to remove obstacles.

Vaishnavas say that in Sri Rudram it is Vishnu who is glorified. Sri Rudram should be interpreted in a way it should be. Let Shiva be Shiva and Vishnu be Vishnu. Similar is the case with Vishnu Sahasra Nama and Acharya's bhasya on it. They argue that Shiva is mentioned as pure, which can be applied to Vishnu to, hence it is Vishnu alone that is praised. They claim that Shiva is Ishvara but Vishnu is Brahman. They do not consider Shiva as supreme. Such approach is not correct. Adi Shankara never thought in the way they think. The attribute of 'pure one' is a distinctive attribute of Shiva.

Even Shiva has attributes which are given to Vishnu. We find them in Shiva Sahasranama, Shiva AtharvaShirsha and Sri Rudram. Both of them have common attributes, but few are distinctive.

One-pointedness is necessary

Hanuman only chanted RAma Nama and not Krishna NAma. When Krishna appeared, he requested Bhagavan to give darshan as Rama

Meera Bai chanted only Krishna's name. She would not chant RAma Nama nor Narasimh nAma

Though all avatars of Vishnu are one and the same, mind can concentrate on only one form.

I think this is one of the reason why we have different sahasranama's for Vishnu, Rama, Krishna, Laxmi-Narsimha and stotra-s dedicated to each form of God. Though you can technically say all forms of Vishnu are one and same, still they have distinctive personality.

Rama would not do that Krishna did, he would not play flute, nor would play politics (which was necessary and not against dharma), etc. Rama would not do what Parashurama did nor did Rama lived like an Avadhoot.

But how can attributes which are generally related to Shiva be considered as that of Vishnu, one may ask.

While I am not a sanskrit scholar, let us try to understand the reason behind such interpretations.

The reason is Sanskrit and Nirukta. Nirukta means lexicon. It gives deeper meaning to a word by further splitting it. One word in Sanskrit can have more than one meaning. Another factor is whether a word has to be considered as a proper noun or common noun or an adjective. A proper noun means a name of any person. Common noun do not point to one individual but is general in nature.

Let us take an example of the word 'Vishnu'

The word Vishnu, which according to the men of learning, is rooted in 'Vi' which means 'All Pervading'. Vishnu is the one who is all pervading. This is the meaning of the word 'Vishnu'. When the word 'Vishnu' is taken as common noun, it is just a quality, which is 'All Pervading'. Hence, Shiva can be called as Vishnu. But when the word 'Vishnu' is being addressed to a person i.e. deity Vishnu, which has a particular form like holding sudarshan chakra, mace, or one who is Laxmi-pati, etc, when it has to be taken as a proper noun. If we take Laxmi-pati as common noun i.e. a general name, we can device another meaning. Laxmi means wealth. What is wealth? It can be money or qualities or spiritual qualities or

vedic knowledge. Pati means master or a swami, the one who is the controller. Hence we can take Laxmi-pati as the one who controls the wealth. i.e. the giver or bestower of wealth (Jnana), which can be Lord Siva.

Though this type of interpretation can be done, the question arises - should this type of interpretation be done? i.e. is this type of interpretation justified?

As per Kanchi Paramacharya, Adi Shankara says that the job of commentator is to give clarity to the verse and should explain in a proper way without twisting words.

This is not to say that the wherever Shiva or Vishnu is used, it always means Lord Shankara with matted locks or Lord Vishnu who has 4 arms with different weapons like mace sudarshan chakra, etc.

An example of Vishnu being translated or interpreted as 'All Pervading' and not four armed Deity Vishnu is Mangal Sloka, which is commonly used before starting any puja or Vishnu Sahasranama or Shiva Shasaranama. This sloka is also a part of Laghu MahaGanapati Puja.

शुक्लाम्बरधरम् विष्णुम्
शशि वर्णम् चतुर्भुजम्
प्रसन्न वदनम् ध्यायेत्
सर्व विघ्नोपशान्तये

śuklāmbaradharam viṣṇum
śaśi varṇaṁ chaturbhujam
prasanna vadanam dhyāyēt
sarva vighnōpaśāntayē

Word to Word Meaning:

Shukla = white or pure;

Ambara = cloth or sky;

Dharam = wearing;

Vishnum = all pervading or omnipresent; [1]

Shashi = moon, rabbit or hare, of the complexion of rabbit; [2]

Varnam = color;

Chatur = four;

Bhujam = shoulder, or a curved object, hence reference to trunk; [3]

rasanna = smiling or pleasant;

Vadanam = face;

Dhyayet = I meditate upon;

Sarva = all;

Vighna = obstacle or hindrance or block;

Upashantaye = remove or abate or pacify.

Meaning: I meditate upon the Lord Ganesha who is clad in white garment (dhoti), who is pervading, who is as bright colored as Moon, who has a smiling face, having four shoulders (or hands), and who is the remover of obstacles.

Note: The above verse can go to Vishnu-ji as it contains the word Vishnu. However, it is customary to invoke Ganesha-ji, whose distinctive quality is to remove obstacles.

[1] Vishnu is taken as common noun. Vishnu means the all pervading. When taken as action of all prevading, it becomes an adjective (corrections welcome)

[2] The word 'SShi' means rabbit, since you see a shape of rabbit in the moon. Dark Spots in moon mean that the complexion is not pure white but, I think, it is smoky-grey colour. This colour is related to Ganesha.

Ganesha ji is also called as dhUmravarNa which is smoke-colored-gray. He is also called krSNapingAkSa - the one with dark blue/black + reddish brown + eyes(ākṣa) Thus being recogized as the One with dark brown/reddish eyes.

However 'SaSi' could also point to Vishnu as in BG 10.21, the Lord says, 'of Nakshatra, I am moon'. However, in Gita it is said, 'I am Moon', while in this verse, it is said, 'Sasi varNam' and not just 'Sasi'.

Any one of Vishnu or Ganesha could be invoked by this mantra.

[3] 'Bhuja' generally means hands, but it also means curved, which resembles to trunk.

The mudgala purāṇa (a upapurāṇa) lists out 32 names of śrī gaṇeśa-ji. One called out is dvija gaṇapati. When I first looked I said, this is twice born (dvija), so most likely 2 heads will be depicted of gaṇeśa. Yet to my surprise dvija gaṇapati is called out as 4-headed.

Hence the connection back to caturbhujaṁ where bhuja is also defined as an elephant trunk. With 4 heads, dvija gaṇapati also has 4 trunks. It (the 4 heads) also symbolizes brahmā. I do not have the mudgala purāṇa in saṃskṛt to check the words , yet the 2 books in my possession almost read the same:

Four-headed dvija gaṇapati, 'the twice-born', is moon-like in color. Holding a noose, a goad, an ola leaf scripture, a staff, water vessel and a his japa beads, He reminds one and all of the urgency for disciplined striving

Adapted from 1, 2 (Due Credits to respected original authors).

Wrong interpretation of Adi Shankara Bhagavadpada's commentary leads to erroneous conclusion

Non-advaitins, particularly Vaishnavas, accuse Adi Shankara and advaita for forced translations and implied meaning.

People talk about deva supremacy and denigrate one God below other. Due to wrong interpretation, seeds of superiority and inferiority are sown from the very shastras which teach us to renounce ego !!!

Vaishnavas think Ishvara and Brahman are not equal. They also think Brahman is person with attributes and go on to interpret Adi Shankara's commentary on this basis and in this process they violate shruti and Adi Shankara's philosophy, which ultimately leads to ajata vada, as passed on to and passed by Gaudapadacharya. **Ishvara has 6 upadhis. Why are they called upadhis?**

Brahman is attributeless, cannot be described, mind and senses return before reaching it. They think it is a person, that too from Advaita POV !!!

There is no question of equating anything with Brahman, as to equate one needs to know both, object that is to be equated and the reference against which it is equated. Hence such equation violates shruti. As we already know the traditional teaching as taught by our acharya Shankara Bhagavapada is adhyAropa ApavAda, which is technically leads to ajata vada.

If we have a look at adhyAsa BhASyam, an intro to SArIrika MimimAmsA (Brahma SUtra), it talks about avidya, it's reason and removal of avidya. Acharya says that avidyA is adhyAsa, superimposition of non-self upon Self (Atman), what is left is pure Knowledge i.e. vidyA meaning the experience of Brahman (not as separate entity). There is no mention in his intro that the purpose is to establish Vishnu as Brahman or give supreme status to Vishnu or any form of God.

We can find adhyAsa BhASya here (html - advaita-vedanta.org), here (pdf of html at scribd) and here (pdf at scribd- commentary by Swami Ghambhirananda)

It can be safely concluded that due to erroneous methods and wrong interpretation of Adi Shanakara' s Bhasyas, their claim that Adi Shankara was a Vaishnav and he only equated Vishnu as supreme Brahman is a false claim.

Earlier we had said that Vaishnavas on basis of Adi Shankara's BhASya-s claim that Adi Shankara preached Vaishnavism and did not gave the status of Brahman to Shiva. Let us now take a look at some verses and Adi Shankara's commentaries on Gita, Kena Up., Prashna, Brihadaranyaka, Isavasya Upanishad and Vishnu Sahasranama.

Nothing mentioned in veda-s is unworthy of worship says Adi Sankara in ISAvAsya Upanishad Is. Up. 8

Adi Sankara in ISAvAsya bhASya 8 he says: न हि शास्त्रविहितं किञ्चिदकर्तव्यतामियात् Nothing that the scripture enjoins is unworthy of adherence.

By stating, we understand that Adi Sankara was not of the opinion that only viShNu, which is his own IshTadevatA is worthy of worship. One is free to worship any God which finds sanction of veda-s.

panchadeva upAsanA mentioned by AchArya in kena upanishad Ke. Up. 1.4

Note: *There is difference in the numbering of the mantras in Gita Press Hindi Edition, Swami Ghambhirananada of Advaita Ashrama, Kolkata and Sitaram's English translation. In the Gitapress edition mantras 3 and 4 of the Advaita Ashrama (Swami Gambhirananda) edition are given as mantra 3. The relevant text presented herewith is cited is from the introduction to mantra 5 of the Advaita Ashrama edition. As per Gitapress Edition, it appears after the bhashya for mantra 3 is over and before bhashya for mantra 4 commences. In Sitaram's Translation it is verse no 1.4. In wisdomLib, verse numbers continue from one chapter to another. For example, Ke. Up. 2.1 is verse 9 in wisdomlib.org*

In either case we will discuss the commentary on the following verse.

यद्वाचानभ्युदितं येन वागभ्युद्यते ।
तदेव ब्रह्म त्वं विद्धि नेदं यदिदमुपासते ॥ ४ ॥

yadvācānabhyuditaṃ yena vāgabhyudyate |
tadeva brahma tvaṃ viddhi nedaṃ yadidamupāsate || 4 ||

Ke. Up. 1.4. What speech does not enlighten, but what enlightens speech, know that alone to be the Brahman, not this which (people) here worship.

While explaining this mantra, AchArya uses the pUrva paksha - vedAnta style (objection - refutation) as usual. pUrva paksha or the objecting party is the logicians or nyAyikA-s (those adhering to nyAya shAstra) and the refuting party is as usual vedAntin. Some also translate objection and refutation as shankA - samAdhAna. shankA means doubt and samAdhAna means solution. shankA-samAdhAna is more used when the dramatized Q-A format is adopted and the doubting party is shiShya (disciple) and solution or clarity is given by guru. In this case, the student is adopting the nyAyikA's views to create a doubt, which is replied by a vedAntin guru. Here the guru is AchArya himself.

w.r.t., the nyAyikA-s (logicians) are of the opinion that Atman is kartA i.e. doer and performs actions and has to pass through the merits & demerits of his actions, and be trapped in the cycle of birth and death. Object of worship (upAsya devatA-s) i.e. viShNu, Ishvara (Siva / rudra), Indra or prANa can be Brahman, but not Atman. Brahman is beyond mAyA and hence it cannot undergo cycles of birth and death as it is not kartA. In other words Atman is distinct of Brahman whom we worship. While one is a witness, other is a doer. Since both are different how can it be true that both are one.

Verses 1.4-8 are similar. In these verses starting from 4th verse, both the nature of Brahman and what it is not is described. Those interested as to know how Atman and Brahman are equal may read commentary from the third verse to get proper clarity. In later verses, AchArya says that the word *'nedam'* i.e. *na-idam* i.e. 'not this' (*idam* means 'this') is being already explained earlier [verse] (in verse 1.4)

Lets understand the verse under context.

यद्वाचानभ्युदितं येन वागभ्युद्यते ।
तदेव ब्रह्म त्वं विद्धि नेदं यदिदमुपासते ॥ ४ ॥

yadvācānabhyuditaṃ yena vāgabhyudyate |
tadeva brahma tvaṃ viddhi nedaṃ yadidamupāsate || 4 ||

Ke. Up. 1.4. What speech does not enlighten, but what enlightens speech, know that alone to be the Brahman, not this which (people) here worship.

Only relevant portion of commentary is quoted. Below is the English Translation of Sankara bhAshya by Sitaram. It is slightly edited. Words in square bracket are not that of Sitaram.

Commentary: When by the verse, "It is somthing distinct from what is known and what is unknown", the preceptor conveyed that Atman is Brahman, the disciple doubted that how can Atman be Brahman. The Atman, as is well known, being entitled to perform karma and worship (of the gods) and being subject to births and re-births seeks to attain brahmA jI and other deva-s, or heaven, by means of karma or worship. Therefore, **somebody other than the Atman [jIva], such as viShNu, Ishvara (Siva / rudra), Indra or prANa, entitled to be worshipped, may well be Brahman; but can never be Atman [jIva]**; for it is contrary to the popular belief. Just as logicians contend that the Atman is distinct from Ishvara (Godhead i.e. viShNu, ISvara, etc), so the votaries of karma worship deva-s, other than Atman, saying, 'Propetiate this deva by sacrifice [i.e. yajna]' and 'Propetiate that deva by sacrifice [i.e. yajna].' Therefore it is only reasonable that what is known and entitled to worship is Brahman and that the worshipper is other than that. The preceptor inferred this doubt running in the disciple's mind either from his looks or from his words and said: 'Do not doubt thus.' ...

From the commentary, we can conclude that

- By saying, 'Propitiate his deva by sacrifice', shows that, during his time, worship of many gods was practiced in karma kANDa.
- By mention of different names of Ishvara i.e. viShNu, Ishvara, etc, we can conclude saguNa Brahman was worshipped in many forms.

- The commentary also indicates that yoga was very popular, as prANa is said to be amongst upAsya devatA i.e. that worthy of worship as Brahman.
- AchArya mentions the name of Ishvara (Siva / rudra) who is an upAsya devatA. It is the belief of disciple that upAsya devatA i.e. viShNu, Ishvara, etc are Brahman, hence akartA (witness), and Atman, which disciple believes it to be jIva is a kartA (doer). The belief of upAsya devatA-s being Brahman is not contradicted by our AchArya. AchArya Sankara bhagavadpAda only explains that the belief of disciple of Atman being a kartA (doer) is wrong. Both Brahman and Atman are akartA i.e. witness and they both are one. Atman is Brahman. Since Sankara bhagavadpAda considers Ishvara / rudra as upAsya devatA, rudra is defnitely not a jIva.

Few words our how prANa can be upAsya devata

Many upanishads like BrihadAraNyaka, prashNa and kena mention prANa as supreme. They also mention that the origin of prANa is Brahman. It is said that, from Brahman, prANa manifested, from prANa, apAna and other four vAyu-s and later another five secondary vAyu-s manifested.

Each body has different types of vAyu-s responsible for carrying out different functions. Yoga Yajnavalkya (YY) mentions 10 different types of vAyu-s. YY 4.47-49 says Ten vayus viz prANa, apAna, samAna, udAna, vyAna, nAga, kurma, krkara, devadatta and dhananjaya. Among these, the five vAyu-s, beginning with prANa are considered important. Among those [five vAyu-s], these two - prANa and apAna are most important, [Gargi], best among women! And of these two, prANa is the most important in all living beings, always (YY 4.47-49). samAna vAyu spreads throughout the body and carries the consciousness i.e. chetanA throughout the body via 72,000 nADI-s.

Just as there are ten prANa-s there are also 14 nADI-s. They, as mentioned in YY, are - suShumNA, iDA, pingalA, sarasvatI, kuhu, ghAndhArI, hastijivA, vishvodara, vAruNI, yashasvinI, payasinI, pUShA, shankhinI, alambuShA

Amongst 14, three are superior viz - IDA, pingalA and suShumNA. Amonst three, suShumNA is the best. Hence Atman enters body, gets situated in center of heart [chakra] (not physical heart). In order to make use of body it manifests itself into prANa and then further splits up into 9 more to spread throughout entire body via nADI-s. During kuNDalini meditation or rAja yoga or laya yoga, etc, these different prANa-s are pulled back and again merge into prANa vAyu, nADI-s merge back into IDA and pingalA and they both merge into suShumNA. The entire prANa is now concentrated in suShumNA. This prANa along with other form of it i.e. kuNDalini arises through meruDaNDI or brahma nADI or suShumNA, passes through various chakra-s reaches crown and finally merges into Atman in heart. This is one way to get enlightened. After kuNDalini reaches and pierces sahasrAra chakra, it enters into empty space. After this only by will i.e. Atma-bala directed by knowledge of Self i.e. Jnana, everything merges into oneness. Then only one 'I' remains. This 'I', the first person, which one thought of as jIva or Atman is realised as Brahman. No second exists to witness this unity or awareness of oneness. This is the supreme non-dual state where eyes, ears, etc cannot reach as the prANa-s have already been withdrawn from the body. This supreme state is beyond mind and so cannot be pervceived. It is breathless-pulse-less state. When the consciousness returns back to body, it again spreads via various prANa-s thereby making one aware of the body. As prANa leaves a particular area or nADI, this area sa hand or leg cannot be perceived or felt. as if they are

motioneless, dead. When all prANa-s entirely retire and accumulate into IDA and pingalA, then the breathing occurs via them. This breathing is not physical breathing, but breathing of prANa. Similarly when prANa-s retire into suShumNa, breathing happens in sushumNA. After kuNDalini reaches sahasrAra and pierces it, then wise say one has to be aware of other 3 bodies - manomaya, viGYAnamaya and Anandamaya koosha. Finally one transcends subtle bodies too and pure consciousness is what remains. This method does not involve finding Atman inside anAhata chakra. Some texts also mention presence of jIva in AGYA chakra. No matter whichever method one adopts, the object used for contemplation, be it any chakra or flame or kuNDalini, they loose their independent existence and dissolve in paramAtmA i.e. Brahman. In the language of yoga, Atman is taken as jIva, and one (jIva) has to achieve union (yoga) with paramAtmA.

We must note that upanishads claim -

1. In the beginning, there is only one Brahman
2. One Brahman became many
3. We must return back to our source.

In the world of yoga, the manifestation of Brahman as jIva is mentioned as –

1. jIva enters body and resides in heart
2. jIVa or Atman manifests as 72,000 nADI-s, IDA, pingalA and suShumNa are the best amongst them.

2. It then manifests prANa-vAyu and other vAyu-s

3. vAyu-s spread through entire body and give it consciousness

The yogic journey is to return back to our source. The backward journey is –

1. Pull back all vAyu-s inside iDA, pingalA and activate kuNDalini. vAyu-s merge into prANa-vAyu

2. Then pull all prANa in suShumNA and arise kuNDalini through suShumNA

3. After kuNDalini rises upto sahasrAra and pierces it, there is experience of unity with paramAtmA.

4. By will and knowledge, dissolve into paramAtmA, thereby abiding into non-dual state.

We should note that prANa does not simply mean prANa-vAyu, it is in general energy present in prANamaya kosha and other kosha-s. Everything is made up of prANa (energy), be it nADi-s, chakra-s or subtle bodies. Similarly, the prANa is omnipresent and is the power or potency of Ishvara as prANa-shakti. This shakti is called by many names like Adi Sakti, mAyA, yoga-mAyA, etc. At times trinity (brahmA, viShNu and rudra) are also mentioned as shakti of Brahman. A yogI surrenders to this omnipresent prANa or kuNDalini devI, the divine mother, who is not just inside, but also outside and present everywhere. Hence it is mentioned in the upanishads that once there was prANa and this prANa is Brahman. Here Brahman refers to saguNa Brahman. In gIta, two types of Brahman are mentioned. At one time, Brahman is to be taken as garbha pr prakruti. I think, upanishads talk about this Brahman. Entire universe is filled with this prANa (energy). Energy has vibrations. These vibrations produce sounds.

Another interpretation of prANa being Brahman is that like saguNa Brahman, one may surrender to omnipresent prANa-shakti for spiritual progress. Another way is to surrender to one's IshTa devatA / devI and pray to him/her to grant his/her grace and guide you to ultimate state of union with paramAtmA by activating kuNDalini and enter into nirvikalpa samAdhi.

Great ancient rishis tapped into this prANa, got tuned into their vibrations and formulated mantra-s which would stimulate prANa. Hence we have different mantra-s to activate different chakra-s. We have different mantra-s which have special names like rAma, kRShNa, Siva, etc. By repeatedly chanting them, one gets in tune with the vibrations of our chakra-s and subtle bodies. These mantra-s cleanse nADI-s, chakra-s, kosha-s, kuNDalini and raises them to sahasrAra chakra. For a yogI, everything that exists is made up of prANa. Every yogI, every tAntrika is a scientist, expert in science of prANa, of vibrations and of sounds. By controlling one's prANa one can achieve mastery over mind. By tapping into universal prANa, one can get in tune with 5 tatva-s, earth, water, etc and can achieve mastery to control them. It is this energy that is worshipped in every form of God. prANa can appear as rAma, kRShNa, Siva and as devi. Emotions and thoughts also a kind of energies that vibrate at a particular frequency. One who can slow down their chakra-s, can even hear their sound or feel it's vibrations. chakra-s are not steady. They keep spinning (slowly) in clockwise and counter-clockwise direction to pull-up positive prANa from atmosphere and throw out negative, used-up prANa back in atmosphere. chakra-s breath prANa. They control various emotions and certain parts of boies, some chakra-s control internal organs like spleen, heart, thymus gland, etc. Imbalance in prANa leads to disease, harmony leds to healthy life.

Few words on how Indra can be upAsya devatA

We are being taught that Indra is a position which any jIva, based on merits can achieve. In the same way the position of brahmA jI, the creator can also be achieved by tremendous accumulation of merits. It is said that bhagavAn hanumAna jI will be the next brahmA. We also know from various stories in purANa-s about the constant insecurity of Indra deva, the king of demi-gods. He is shown to be in constant fear of losing his kindgom or his position. Kena Upanishad 3.12 also mentioned how Indra, agnI and other deva-s realised Brahman. Hence they are considered as jIva-s. However, Indra of veda-s is poles apart. He is not an insecured king, but is described as Brahman in rg veda (Rig Veda).

Just like viShNu, Siva and brahmA are often shown as born out of each other and at times one is superior than another, this is not the case with Indra. The non-difference between trinity is accepted amongst advaitins, but Indra is not worshipped these days.

There is also another popular opinion which does not accept Indra as supreme Godhead. The verses that glorify Indra as conquerer of all and unconquered, in book one of rg veda belong to the samhita or brAhmaNa part. These verses are used in performing vedic rites. In vedic karma-kANDa, it is accepted to offer oblations to many devatA-s and the glorification of them is considered as artha-vAda i.e. exaggeration. mimAmsaka-s consider the verses glorifying any form of God be it viShNu or Siva as the supreme Brahman as artha-vAda and discard them. This is because they consider veda-s as supreme and all fruits of yajna-s is given by veda-s themselves. They do not believe in

the One-Supreme-Godhead who alone is creater, preserver and destroyer. In other words, they do not believe in One Godhead, under whose sway all other Gods function.

Accepting Indra as supereme Godhead is difficult for us. Hence let us understand why Indra can be upAsya devatA.

It is said in viShNu purANa that whenever any form of Ishvara is eulogized as sole creator, preserver and destroyer, it is indeed the eulogization of the nirguNa Brahman. Since Brahman cannot be seen, hence it is not possible to sing it's glory. In order to induce devotion, it is depicted having a form and is worshipped via this beloved form. In the same way, veda-s have also depicted Indra, not as a superior jIVa, who has achieved the position of Indra. The name of Indra can be different. After the tenure of one Indra finishes, another one is installed in his place. What remains is the position of Indra. Indra means 'excellent', the best amonst all. viShNu and Siva are at times described as the best amonst all devatA-s. While eugolizing Indra, even viShNu is called as upendra, the one who is inferior to Indra. It is their position that is eulogized. Naturally, Brahman has to be the best amonst all. Only then it is worthy of worship. IMHO, it is this quality of being excellent amongst all devatA-s that is worshipped. Indra is also known as devendra, the Lord of gods. Indra, like viShNu, also protects rightousness and has many heroic deeds to his credit.

Though there are many hymns in rg veda, atharva veda, mahAbhArata and other shAstra-s, we find it difficult to accept Indra as Brahman. We forget to take yogic approach. There is a famous episode found in shAtra-s from veda-s to purANa-s. It is the spaying of vritra, the demon, the Indra. Infact one of the famous name of Indra is vRtrahan (वृत्रहन्) - slayer of vRtra (Vritra). The two rivers that aare blocked as IDA and pingalA. The vajra, which can be grace of God (Indra, the most excellent) can only liberate or awaken the dormant kuNDalini shakti, and arise it to sahasrAra. In this way, the Indra, the most exhalted one, is worthy of worship. Indra is often shown his fondness of drinking soma juice. This soma juice is not just physical in nature. Each one of us has soma, the nectar, which drops from brahmarandra, a small hole below the brain. This hole is made up of energy. This brilliant juice soma or amrut (Amrit) is sprinkled by chandra on the earth. This means, soma flows into our system as drops. There is no continuous flow of soma. From head, soma descends to the lower chakra-s which join us to the physical world. The last three chakra-s mulAdhAra, svAdhisthAna and manipura are connected to lower worlds and keep us in physical world. Once kuNDalini rises beyond manipur and enters into anAhat, a yogI experiences first glimpse of divinity. Indra is shown of drinking soma. If soma is the first drink of libation, Indra becomes the first god of Yajna. Alternatively drinking soma may have different meanings. It is said that all oblations ultimately get offered to nirguNa Brahman. Food that we eat is an offering to paramAtmA. It is paramAtmA who enjoys everything. Hence Indra drinking soma means that though jIva enjoys this nectar, it is in reality being drunk by Indra, the most excellent amongst all. This also confirms non-duality of jIva and Brahman. jIva or Atman is Brahman. The in-breath (of energy) of paramAtmA is the out-breath of jIva and vice versa. Offering oblation and God drinking oblation represents this divine in-breath and out-breath.

book 1, hymn 101, verse 5 says Indra is Lord of the world

5 He who is Lord of all the world that moves and breathes, who for the Brahman first before all found the Cows;

Indra who cast the Dasyus down beneath his feet,—him girt by Maruts we invoke to be our Friend.

Here it is mentioned that 'He who is Lord of all the world that moves and breathes'. Breathing is mentioned. This is the breath of our higher soul or paramAtmA. As said earlier, in-breath of jIva is out-breath of paramAtmA and out breath (our offering / oblation) of jIva is in-breath of paramAtmA. Later part says, who for Brahman, first before all found the cows'. We know that Indra has wish fulfilling cow. Cows give milk. This milk is the grace or knowledge or the Lord.

'marut' means air or prANa-s. In other words marut is inner breath or breathing of energy through IDA and pingalA. dasyu is the one who lives to eat and drink and do not perform any religious duties.

The yogic meaning of second part of verse 5 would be - the lower animal (worldly) qualities are encircled or covered by prANa-s or energy and is controlled by Indra. Hence Indra here is the controller of prANa-s. maruts and rudra-s, which are different types of prANa-s are shown as assisting Indra in carrying out his work.

Indra at times is also depicted as intelligence or knowledge. Here we take it as knowledge of the Self or Brahman.

We also recall mAruti, the son of marut, rAma bhakta hanumAna, also known as pavan-pUtra. hanumAna is this subtle breath of energy ever surrendered to the paramAtmA rAma. For us, laymen, hanumAn jI is the greatest rAma bhakta, and is real character and a part of our history, one of the seven chiranjivi-s (immortals). But for some in addition to acceptance of his physical presence as rAma bhakta, he is also subtle breath of energy. Praying to hanumAna jI is the best way to reach rAma. If one has to reach or know rAma, one has to reach him via grace of hanumAna jI.

In verse 7, hymn XVII of book 2 of rg veda, Indra is compared with bhaga. bhaga is generally referred to Siva.

7 As she who in her parents' house is growing old, I pray to thee as Bhaga from the seat of all.

Grant knowledge, mete it out and bring it to us here: give us the share wherewith thou makest people glad.

8 May we invoke thee as a liberal giver thou givest us, O Indra, strength and labours. Help us with manifold assistance, Indra: Mighty One, Indra, make us yet more wealthy.

In hymn XXI of rg veda (book 2), verse 1, Indra is described as 'conquerer of all'

1. To him the conquerer of all, the conquerer of wealth, of light; him who is Lord for ever, Lord (conquerer) of men and tilth,

Him who is Lord of horses, Lord of kine, of floods, to Indra, to the Holy bring sweet Soma juice.

Book one, hymn 4, verse 4 of rg veda says Indra is 'unconquered'

4 Go to the wise unconquered One, ask thou of Indra, skilled in song,

Him who is better than thy friends.

Book one, hymn 8 of rg veda, verse 5 says Indra is supreme

5 Mighty is Indra, yea supreme; greatness be his, the Thunderer:
Wide as the heaven extends his power.

In yogic / tAntrika approach, we often find fusion of three goddesses umA-laxmI-sarasvatI, often called as durgA or ambA, etc. Similarly, all the qualities of Gods gets fused into the ISTa devatA. In yogic way of thought, these Gods are often referred to as internal energies or energy points or a particular qualities. Hence when a disciple is stuck on the yogic path and the nADI-s are blocked, then the cause is determined and the opposite (divine) quality is glorified, then activated and awakened, thereby clearing the choked up nADI-s and clearing emotional and mental blockages. This helps one progress spiritually.

We have often heard of piercing of three knots - brahmA at bottom (mulAdhA / svAdhiSthAna) , viShNu in the middly (anAhat) and rudra (AGYA. Ajna, 3rd eye chakra). We have also heard of hraday granthi (heart-knot).These knots or granthi-s are blockages of energy often caused by emotional, mental or kArmika (karmic) nature.

The yajna is the inner yajna. Fire is kunDalini. The oblations (Ahuti / bali or havis) is a mantra or any process and striking of kuNDalini. The result is spiritual progress. veda-s do not imply only external ritualistic application.

What I believe is that, yogic approach makes one worship many devatA-s as energy points, as those residing in chakra-s and present as sound vibrations inside chakra-s and at various other positions inside nADI-s. As one evolves spiritually, nADI-s, chakra-s and energies are cleansed and purified.

We must also note that in the times of Adi Sankara, there were worshippers of yama deva, who thought him not to be of dark complexion, but of pure white complexion. For them yama was beyond mAyA and hence beyond time and space. As far as yogic process is concerned or some secret kriyA for enhancing life and delaynig death is concerned, certain approaches can be helpful, but for laymen, in whom kuNDalini is not activated by a sadguru, simple worship of yama deva may have been more of a obstruction. Hence Adi Sankara had to correct the philosophy of yama-vAdi-s (believers of yama as the supreme Godhead).

Similarly, wise must have thought of complications in worship of brahmA jI and Indra. Hence their worship is discouraged and discontinued. This leaves the two main Gods to be worshipped - Siva and viShNu. Since rAma and kRShNa were avatAra of our beloved viShNu, they too are worshipped. Some also meditate on narasimha upAsanA and the rewards of this worship is that no evil can touch them. Some even say that those who have mastered narasimha upAsanA might ward off evil energies and spirits from others. Ofcourse moksha can also beachieved via worship of narasimha.

Lord Siva is sarvaGYa Ishvara, Brahman and mA pArvatI is Atma-vidyA Ishvara says Adi Shankara in Kena Upanishad 3.12 and 4.1

In Kena Up. Bhasya, 3.12 (*Gita Press, Gorakhpur (Hindi)) Adi Sankara explains that umA always stays with all-knowledgeable Ishvara and the she said to Indra that the one who appeared before him and disappeared as a flash of light was none other than Brahman.*

In pada bhasya, it is said (in hindi), उमारुपिणि - स्त्रीवेशधारिणी उमारुपा विद्यादेवी further it says, knowledge (vidya) is the most auspicious (शोभायमान), as knowledge is the most auspicious.

In vakya-bhasya, Adi Sankara says that she is the daughter of himAlaya. Hence she is haimAvati.

Later AchArya says, (hindi) वह सर्वदा उस सर्वज्ञ ईश्वरके साथ वर्तमान रहती है; अतः उसे जाननेमें समर्थ होगी - meaning -

She (haimAvati, umA) always stays with sarvaGYA Ishvara (all knowledgeable Lord), hence she must be capable of knowing him.

This clearly indicates that umA or pArvati, who is a daughter of himAlaya, always stays in the company of all knowledgeable Lord, hence she is capable to inform who appeared for brief time in front of me (Indra) and then disappeared. Since Adi Sankara says 'sarvaGYeneshvareNa saha vartata' meaning the one who always stays with all powerful Lord, he implies it is Lord Siva only as it is mentioned in VP that she married to Siva. In the next verse Kena Up. 4.1, umAdevI answers, he was Brahman. i.e. the one who mysteriaously appeared and disappeared in front of you was Brahman himself.

It can be concluded that

- Uma, Haimavati means Maa Parvati, consort of Lord Shiva
- She appears in the form of lady and she is of the form of vidya (vidya-svarupa)
- She knows the truth (later she tells the truth that this was brahman who vanished)
- To stay with sarvaGYa Ishvara means to be with Lord Shiva --> Knowledge stays with Lord. They both cannot be separated. Jnana-svarupa.
- Though Adi Shankara has not used the word 'Shiva' or 'Rudra', he has made reference to Lord Shiva

Again, Since Shiva is Brahman, real nature is formless, which is shown here by saying that -- Knowledge appeared in the form of a Lady (Maa Parvati). It was ego which was not allowing Indra to see Ishvara. Since the incident is in dramatic form, hence the word 'seeing' is used. The word darshan, though generally is taken as 'seeing' actually means 'to know' and the word Ishvara in this context, 'of knowledge appearing in form of a lady' can be taken as Brahman. Here humiliation means removal of ego, which happened to Indra, Agni and Vayu deva(s)

The argument that by staying with Siva, who is parambhAgavata, even umA has complete knowledge of Brahman who is none other than viShNu is not acceptable by an advaitin, as Ishvara is saguNa Brahman and perhaps there is no reason for umA to come up for his brother viShNu, when laxmi mAtA who is also AtmavidyA (VSN Bh. #943) could have appeared instead of umA and could have given brahma-GYAna to Indra and others.

Since atma-vidyA and Brahman cannot be different, hence Siva and pArvatI (Adi Shakti) are one and the same.

rudra in BrihadAraNkaya Br. Up 1.4.11-12, prashNa Up 2.9 and Kaivalya Up. 8

In Br. Up. 1.4.11 and 1.4.12, Adi Sankara has referred to rudra. In Br. Up. 1.4.11, Adi Sankara uses the word 'rudraH pashUnAm' Some claim that since the rudra described here is pashUpatI, i.e. lord of animals (pashu), which is an epithet of umApati rudra or Sankara, and that this rudra is said to be born, hence Adi Sankara considered rudra is jIva and not Ishvara. However, this argument is not true.

brAhmanA 4 of chapter 1 i.e. Br. Up. 1.4 explains creation. While explaining creation, Adi Sankara didnt used the word viShNu though at many places he had a chance to use them. Br. Up. Explains creation from Atman. Neither in the introduction of fourth brahman nor in the first verse which describes creation of prajApati from cosmic egg and formation of first purusha, Adi Sankara has explained that from caturbhuja viShNu, the egg was formed, neither did AchArya explained that universe originated from viShNu. He didnt use the word viShNu for Atman. In the introduction of this brAhmaNa, Adi Sankara describes that - in previous brAhmaNa by the knowledge of prANa, one can know or become prajApati. After the formation of prajApati, here, in the fourth brAhmAna, creation is described. Adi Sankara didnt explained that from viShNu, the creation is formed. Adi SAnkara simply explained the verse in context and we are expected to take obvious meaning except the AchArya himself specifies.

Eleventh verse i.e. Br. Up. 1.4.11 explains kshatriya-ShRShTi i.e. creation of kshatriya-varNa. We will quote the relevant part of verse (sloka) -

> Br. Up. 1.4.11: In the beginning there was only one Brahman.... Amongst devatA-s (demi-gods) those who were kshatriya-s like Indra, varuNa, soma, rudra, megha, yama, mRtyu (mrityu) and IshAna el al (इति, etc) were created.

Adi Sankara explains this portion of sloka as -

> Br. Up. Bh. 1.4.11 In the beginning there only one [one] Brahman, meaning, that which assumed the form and nature of fire after creating fire was [none other than] Brahman only...The word kshatriyANi indicates plurality [i.e. there are more than one person in the kshatriya jAti).

> Who are they? Thus shruti says - special mention amongst those [who are the lords or rulers of various category] are explained here -
>
> - King of devatA-s (demi-gods) – Indra
> - King or God of water - varuNa
> - Lord of brAhmaNa-s - soma
> - Lord of pashu - rudra
> - King or ruler of lightening, etc - megha
> - King of pitr (ancestors) - yama
> - Lord of disease, etc - mRtyu (mrityu) and
> - Lord of various lights (prakAsha) - IshAna, etc
>
> those who are kshatriya-s were created. Thus after creating Indra, etc demi-gods, from these kshatriya devatA-s were created pururavA etc, chandra and sUryavanshI human kshatriya clans. In order to create human kshatriya-s, deva-kshatriya-s were created....

It is this explanation which is used in support of the claim that rudra i.e. pashUpati rudra was created. Hence Adi Sankara did not accept Siva as Ishvara or saguNa Brahman.

Now lets understand this sloka. It talks about -

- Creation of kshatriya clan
- Creation of devatA-s for kashatriya clan
- More than one devatA is created. Few important ones are mentioned
- rudra and IshAna are mentioned as lords of pashu and prakAsha.

Here the general association of Siva with tamasa and destruction of jagat is not mentioned. Hence this rudra is not the deity of destruction. while interpreting Adi Sankara, we must make sure that our AchArya must be interpreted in such a way that he does not contradict any shruti, smriti, itihAsa or gItA. As per mahAbhArata and viShNu purANa there is a mention of eight and eleven rudra-s.

Since the name Ishana also appears along with rudra, we understand that this rudra is not deity of destruction, but a demi-god, who manifested in brahmA jI's lap. This rudra was further divided into 7 more i.e. a total of eight rudra-s were created. Since all eight deities are called as rudra-s, hence to pinpoint from 8 rudra-s - Rudra, Sarva, Pashupati, Ugra, Asani, Bhava, Mahadeva and Ishana as mentioned in Satpatha Brahmana, our āchārya must have specified it as pashupati-rudra. If he wanted, he could have also mention the name as 'umāpati rudra pashUnAm', etc. We must also understand that in purANa-s, the central deity is shown supreme and all others are inferior to him and depend upon him to carry out their prescribed duties. We must also note that anything prescribed by shruti is always worthy of practice.

Coming back to 'rudraH pashUnAm', the word 'paśu' or 'pashu' also has different meanings like animal or jīva. If we take pashu to mean ' jIva', it would mean that 'rudra is the Lord of jIva-s'. Lord of jIva-s cannot be a jIva. Infact Lord of pashu (animals) also cannot be a jIva, as only Ishvara can be the lord of any jIva, be it human or animal. Humans are also called as pashu, if we do not adhere to dharma. It is dharma which separates us from animals says Adi Sankara in his Brahma sUtra bhAshya introduction. This is said by Sri Kanchi Paramacharya in his book 'Hindu Dharma - The Eternal Way of Life'

We will come back to 8 rudra-s. These eight rudra-s had their wives, their offsprings and the kingdom or domain of that they are to rule. They are -

8 rudra-s: Rudra, Sarva, Pashupati, Ugra, Asani, Bhava, Mahadeva and Isana
8 wives: Suverchalá, Ushá, Vikesí, Sivá, Swáhá, Diśá, Díkshá, and Rohiní

8 kingdoms: sun, water, earth, air, fire, ether, Brahman performing yajna, and the moon

8 sons: Sanaiśchara (Saturn), Śukra (Venus), lohitannga (the fiery-bodied Mars), Manojava (Hanumán), Skanda, Sarga, Santána, and Budha (Mercury)

We understand that these rudra-s are not involved in destruction, but in the creation of raudra shṛṣṭi.

This theory of creation or raudra shRShTi is found in VP 1.8.1-14

VP 1.8.12-14 says that - In the same way, Rudra married Daksha's daughter Sati, who got angry on daksha and immolated herself in yajña. Then she was born (as umā) of Menā and Himālaya. **She married Bhagavān Hara** (उपयेमे पुनश्चोमामनन्यां **भगवान्हरः** ।। वि.पु १.८.१४।। VP 1.8.14

The word used is 'Bhagavān Hara'. 'Bhagavān' Hara cannot be jīva.

I doubt that rudra mentioned in Br. Up. Bh. 1.4.11 by Adi Sankara is the same rudra who is considered as Śiva / Śankara who is considered as creator, preserver and destroyer in bhAgavat purANa's episode of samudra manthan (churning of ocean).

Br. Up. 1.4.12 also mentions rudra. This time, he is not the one of 8 rudra-s but one of 11 rudra-s. Interestingly, the 11 rudra-s are also 11 types of prANa-s with Sankara as the best amongst them. The name Sankara, which is one of the eleven rudra-s i.e. prANa is menioned in gItA too (BG 10.23). He is mentioned in Br. Up. 3.9.4

Br. Up. III-ix-4: 'Which are the Rudras ?' 'The ten organs in the human body, with the prana as the tenth and the atma as the eleventh. When they depart from this mortal body, they make (one's relatives) weep. Because they then make them weep, therefore they are called Rudras.'

> Note. Here Ten prANa-s are mentioned. As per Yoga Yajnavalkya, the ten prANa-s are
>
> prANa, apAna, vyAna, udAna, samAna, nAga, kurma, krkara, Devadatta, dhananjaya
>
> For more details, please visit Sanatan Dharma website

rudra is mentioned in praShNa upanishad Pr. Up. 2.9 - you prANa are Indra (parameshara), By your teja (virya), or power, you, as rudra, are destroyer of this world

and during preservation, you by your benign form protect this world. This rudra- the destroyer is acknowledged by Adi Sankara in his commentary on this verse too.

As I understand, Adi Sankara simply explained verses in hand. When the verse used the word ;Atman', Adi Sankara will use the word 'Atman', when shruti uses the word 'Brahman', 'prANa', 'Siva' or 'viShNu', Adi Sankara uses the same name in his commentary. At times, our AchArya divides his commentary into two parts - padya and vAkya bhAshya. the padya bhAshya or commentary is simple to understand, while the vAkya bhAshya is more technical in nature, often splitting up important words, giving grammatically correct meaning, or giving symbolic meaning that corrects conveys the message of shruti vachana (verse) under context.

Coming back to Br. Up, in Br. Up. 1.4.12, which talks about creation of vaiśya shṛṣṭi, Ādi Śankara also comments on vaiśya shṛṣṭi and presence of many rudra-s like many Vasu-s and Gaṇeṣaḥ who collectively are able to do the prescribed work. They, on individual level are not capable of accomplishing any given task.

Br. Up. 1.4.12. ... He (Brahman) created vaishyajāti. (Brahman) created those known as - vasu, Rudra, Āditya, vishveda and marut etc devagaṇa are called as gaṇeṣaḥ

Our Āchārya says,

"...The purport or essence of multiplicity in deva-jāti like that 'gaṇeṣaḥ' meaning a group of gaṇa-s, collectively are known as gaṇeṣaḥ (plural), as vaiṣya community are inclined towards gaṇa-s, they are collectively capable of earning money or property, not individually. Vasu-s are eight gaṇa-s in number, rudra-s are eleven, Aditya are twelve, vishvedeva are thirteen - all these are sons of Vishva. Or Vishvadevaḥ means 'All deva-gaṇa-s' i.e. all deva-s. In this way there are forty-nine marut-s (सप्तसप्त गणाः, 7 x 7 = 49 - as given in Gita Press, Hindi Translation page 289)

Āchārya mentioned 'eleven rudra-s'. These eleven rudra-s are mentioned in Mahābhārata when Yudhiṣṭhira asks Bhiṣma certain questions about sacred mantra-s

“Aja, Ekapada, Ahivradhna, the unvanquished Pinakin, Rita Pitrirupa, the three-eyed Maheswara, Vrishakapi, Sambhu, Havana, and Iswara–these are the celebrated Rudras, eleven in number, who are the lords of all the worlds. Even these eleven high-souled ones have been mentioned as a hundred in the Satarudra (of the Vedas)”. (MBH 13:CL)

Various purANa-s mention rudra-s originating from either brahma or from cow surabhi or from Siva. Names of 11 rudra-s differs at various places. One instance where the rudra-s are named and are supposed to be rudra-s of present kalpa are

1. Mahadeva, 2. Shiva , 3. Maha Rudra, 4. Shankara, 5. Neelalohita, 6. Eshana Rudra, 7. Vijaya Rudra, 8. Bheema Rudra, 9. Devadeva, 10. Bhavodbhava and 11. Adityatmaka Srirudra.

Their 11 consorts of these 11 Rudras in this present Kalpa are respectively the following names:-

1. Dhee devi, 2. Dhritti devi, 3. Ushna (Rasala) devi, 4. Uma devi, 5. Neeyut devi, 5. Sarpi devi, 7. Eela devi, 8. Ambika devi, 9. Ieravati devi, 10. Sudha devi and 11. Deeksha devi

Shatarudriya hymns celebrates Rudra in his eleven forms as : Aghora (benevolent); Kapardi (with matted hair); Girisha (Lord of mountains) ; Bhima(terrible) ; Nilagriva (blue throated); Trayambaka (three eyed); Sabhapathi (master of the assembly); Ganapathi (leader of the hosts); Senani(commander of forces); Samkara(doer of good); and Shambhu (appearing for the welfare of all).

Credit: Mahapashupatastra Blog and http://creative.sulekha.com/the-rudras-eleven_398301_blog

In Br. Up. 1.4.12, rudra-s were created for creating vaishya-jAti.

In the same way, there are verses in svetashvatara Upanishad, atharvashikhA upanishad, atharvashirsha upanishad, kaivalya upanishad, pancha brahma upanishad, nIla rudra upanishad and of course Sri rudram of yajurveda which describes superiority of rudra as unborn, only reality and granter of moksha. Out of these upanishads, svetashvatara upanishad and kaivalya upanishad are quoted by Adi SAnkara. Sv. Up. is extensively quoted.

Sv. Up. 3-7: Higher than this Personal Brahman is the infinite Supreme Brahman, who is concealed in all beings according to their bodies, and who, though remaining single, envelops the whole universe. Knowing him to be the Lord, one becomes immortal.

Sv. Up. 3-8: I have realized this Great Being who shines effulgent like the sun beyond all darkness. One passes beyond death only on realizing Him. There is no other way of escape from the circle of births and deaths.

Sv. Up. 4-20: His form does not stand within the range of the senses. No one perceives Him with the eye. Those who know Him through the faculty of intuition as thus seated in their heart, become immortal.

Sv. Up. 4-21: **Some, being afraid, approach Thee, thinking that Thou art the unborn. O Rudra, deign to protect me with that benevolent face of Thine.**

Adi Sankara has quoted Kaivalya Upanishad 8 while commenting one name # 114 rudra in viShNu sahasranAma bhAshya.

Kai. Up. 8. He is Brahma, He is Shiva, He is Indra, He is the Immutable, the Supreme, the Self-luminous, He alone is Vishnu, He is Prana, He is Time and Fire, He is the Moon.

Kaivalya Upanishad considers Siva / rudra as unborn Supreme Brahman, substratum and origin of entire universe, and to be meditated as Self of all

Kai. Up. 6. (Who is) unthinkable, unmanifest, of endless forms, the good, the peaceful, Immortal, the origin of the worlds, without beginning, middle, and end, the only one, all-pervading, Consciousness, and Bliss, the formless and the wonderful.

Kai. Up. 7. **Meditating on the highest Lord, allied to Um**a, powerful, three-eyed, blue-necked, and tranquil, the holy man reaches Him who is the source of all, the witness of all and is beyond darkness (i.e. Avidya).

Kai. Up. 19. In me alone is everything born, in me does everything rest, and in me is everything dissolved. I am that Brahman, the secondless.

Kai. Up. 20. I am minuter than the minute, I am likewise the greatest of all, I am the manifold universe. **I am the Ancient One, the Purusha and the Ruler, I am the Effulgent One, and the All-good.**

Kai. Up. 25. He who studies the Shatarudriya, is purified as by the Fires, is purified from the sin of drinking, purified from the sin of killing a Brahmana, from deeds done knowingly or unawares. Through this he has his refuge in Shiva, the Supreme Self. One who belongs to the highest order of life should repeat this always or once (a day).

Kai. Up. 26. By means of this, one attains the Knowledge that destroys the ocean of Samsara or repeated transmigration. Therefore, knowing thus one attains the fruit of Kaivalya or liberation, verily one attains liberation.

By meditating on the highest lord, the upanishad also says that

Kai. Up. 10. Seeing the Atman in all beings, and all beings in the Atman, one attains the highest Brahman – not by any other means.

Hence, rudra is the be meditated as AtmasvarUpa, just like viShNu has to be meditated as AtmasvarUpa, as antaryAmI or as sutrAtmA, as said n gItA chapter 9. One can meditate on supreme Brhaman by chanting OM, hence OM is explained.

Kai. Up. 11. Making the Atman the (lower) Arani, and OM the upper Arani, by the repeated friction of knowledge, a wise man burns up the bond.

Since Brhaman has to be meditated as AtmasvarUpa, i.e. your very Self, Brahman has to be meditated with abheda buddhi and abheda bhAva. this is mentioned in verse 16

16. **That which is the Supreme Brahman**, the soul of all, the great support of the universe, subtler than the subtle, and eternal – **that is thyself, and thou art That.**

From the above verses, we can also understand that there are two rudra-s -

1) Demi-god or a group of demi-gods who has limited powers and is involved in process of evolution of universe and creation of mankind

2) Is the Supreme Brahman himself who is beyond creation, preservation and destruction. There are verses not only in mahAbhArata and purANa-s but also in veda-s.

If we combine both verses Br. Up. 1.4.11 and Br. Up. 1.4.12, we understand there are two types of rudra-s. If we add Pr. Up. 2.9, Kai. Up. 8 and various verses of Sv. Up, we get third type of rudra - the one rudra who is supreme Brahman.

1) Eight in number - Rudra, Sarva, Pashupati, Ugra, Asani, Bhava, Mahadeva and Isana

2) Eleven in number - Aja, Ekapada, Ahivradhna, the unvanquished Pinakin, Rita Pitrirupa, the three-eyed Maheswara, Vrishakapi, Sambhu, Havana, and Iswara

3) Rudra - the supreme Brahman.

Lord Shiva is Atman, Brahman and Paramatma, the supreme Self says Adi Shankara in Gita

उपद्रष्टाऽनुमन्ता च भर्ता भोक्ता महेश्वरः।
परमात्मेति चाप्युक्तो देहेऽस्मिन्पुरुषः परः।।13.23।।

English translation by Swami Gambhirananda

13.23 He who is the Witness, the Permitter, the Sustainer, the Experiencer, the great Lord, and who is also spoken of as the transcendental Self is the supreme Person in this body.

English translation by Swami Gambhirananda (on Sri Sankaracharya's Sanskrit Commentary)

13.23 ... **He is maheSvarah, the great God, because, as the Self of all and independent, He is the great Ruler.He is paramatma, the transcendental Self,** because He is the Self which has the characteristics of being the supreme Witness etc. of (all) those-beginning from the body and ending with the intellect-which are imagined through ignorance to be the indwelling Self. **He is api ca, also; uktah, spoken of, referred to, in the Upanisads; iti, as, with the words; 'He is the indwelling One, the paramatma, the transcendental Self.' Ast reads atah in place of antah. So the translation of the sentence will be: Therefore He is also referred to as the transcendental Self in the Upanisads.**-Tr. Where is He? The parah, suprem; purusah, Person, who is higher than the Unmanifest and who will be spoken of in, 'But different is the supreme Person who is spoken of as the transcendental Self' (15.17); is asmin, in this; dehe, body.What has been presented in, '...also understand Me to be the Knower of the field' (2), has been explained and conclude.

Sanskrit commentary by Sri Sankaracharya

... महेश्वरः, सर्वात्मत्वात् स्वतन्त्रत्वाच्च महान् ईश्वरश्च इति महेश्वरः। परमात्मा, देहादीनां बुद्ध्यन्तानां प्रत्यगात्मत्वेन कल्पितानाम् अविद्यया परमः उपद्रष्टृत्वादिलक्षणः आत्मा इति परमात्मा। 'सोऽन्तः परमात्मा' इत्यनेन शब्देन च अपि उक्तः कथितः श्रुतौ। क्व असौ? अस्मिन् देहे पुरुषः परः अव्यक्तात्, 'उत्तमः पुरुषस्त्वन्यः परमात्मेत्युदाहृतः (गीता 15।17)' इति यः वक्ष्यमाणः।।'क्षेत्रज्ञं चापि मां विद्धि (गीता 13।2)' इति उपन्यस्तः व्याख्याय उपसंहृतश्च, तमेतं यथोक्तलक्षणम् आत्मानम् -- ।।13.23।।

Adi Shankara considers Shiva as the Supreme Brahman.

One may argue by the same principle that the meaning of Maheshvara is 'Great God', which can be applied to Vishnu / Krishna too. If you have noticed, everywhere Krishna uses the word 'I' or 'me' i.e. maama. Hence, here this could be taken as non-difference between Shiva and Krishna or that in this verse, Bhagavan refers to Shiva (MaheSvara)

Adi Sankara didn't translate 'ISA' as 'rudra' in his gItA bhASya on verse BG 11.15

In BG 11.15, rAmAnuja has translated the word 'ISA' as rudra, however Adi Sankara didnt translate the word 'ISA' as 'rudra' but simply translated as 'ISvara' or 'The Lord'. The translation fits into the context as Lord BrahmA ji is mentioned as sitting on Lotus.

Lets have a look at the mUla sloka (moola sloka)

arjuna uvāca
paśyāmi devāṁs tava deva dehe
sarvāṁs tathā bhūta-viśeṣa-saṅghān
brahmāṇam īśaṁ kamalāsana-stham
ṛṣīṁś ca sarvān uragāṁś ca divyān

Arjuna said: My dear Lord Krishna, I see assembled in Your body all the demigods and various other living entities. I see Brahma sitting on the lotus flowerand all the sages and divine serpents.

Commentary by Adi Sankara

11.15 Deva, O God; pasyami, I see, perceive; tava dehe, in Your body; sarvan, all; the devan, gods; tatha, as also; bhuta-visesa-sanghan, hosts of (various) classes of beings, groups of moving and non-moving living things having different shapes; and besides, brahmanam, Brahma, with four faces; isam, the Ruler of creatures; kamalasana-stham, sitting on a lotus seat, i.e. sitting on Mount Meru which forms the pericarp of the lotus that is the earth; and sarvan, all; the divyan, heavenly; rsin, sages-Vasistha and others; and (the heavenly) uragan, serpents-Vasuki and others.

Other commentators like Shreedhar Swami, Madhusudan Saraswati, Neelkantha, Dhanpati Suri, Shankarananda did not denigrate the status of Siva as done by rAmAnuja and other vaiShNava AcArya-s like mAdhvAcArya, keshava kASmiri. It is interesting to note that viSvanAtha chakravarty of gauDiya vaiSNava sampradAya didnt denigrate the status of Siva.

Note: Commentary by MadhvAchArya uploaded by Gita Super Site (beta) says that MadhvAchArya didnt comment on this verse. Some have presented the translation on this verse.

vinAyaka and mAtrikA in Shankara BhASya BG 9.25

In bhagavad gItA bhASya BG 9.25, Adi Sankara mentions the word 'VinAyaka' and 'mAtrikA' says that those who worship 'vinAyaka', 'mAtrikA', etc goes to their loka-s and those who worship 'Me' i.e bhagavAn reaches him. Some believe, this 'vinAyaka' it is gauripUtra 'GaNeSa' and the mAtrikA-s are none other than those women who took care of Siva pUtra 'skanda'. Whenever we read Adi Sankara bhagavadpAda's bhASya, we have to see that at no time veda-s are contradicted. Ganesha is a vedic deity. Here vinayaka has to be taken as plural, as it would violate shruti if Ganesh is mentioned. vinAyakas are jivas which are above human race but lower than devas says Swami Sivananda in his Gita Commentary which closely follows Sankara bhASya says that vinAyaka-s are jIva-s, a yOnI above human and below devatA-s. svAmI ji has taken 'vinAyaka 'as plural.. Sub-commentary by Neelkantha does not specifically mention the word vinAyaka, though Madhusudan and Sridhara Swami have mentioned. Sri Anandgiri does not mention the word vinAyaka. rAmAnuja, vedAnta deSikA and mAdhva does not mention the word vinAyaka in their bhASya-s. In context to the verse and explanation, scholars translate Vinayaka in plural sense, which are types of Jiva-s as mentioned earlier.

Wise have interpreted both names in plural forms i.e. 'vinAyaka-s' and 'mAtrikA-s'. The plural forms of both names are mentioned in bhAgavat purANa in episode of war between bhagavAna kRShNa and demon bANasura in BP 10.63.10-11 and in the episode of pUtanAvadha i.e. killing of demoness pUtanA in BP 10.6.27-29.

BP 10.63.10-11: With sharp-pointed arrows discharged from His bow Śārṅga, Lord Kṛṣṇa drove away the various followers of Lord Śiva — Bhūtas, Pramathas, Guhyakas, ḍākinīs, Yātudhānas, Vetālas, Vināyakas, Pretas, Mātās, Piśācas, Kuṣmāṇḍas and Brahma-rākṣasas.

BP 10.6.27-29: The evil witches known as ḍākinīs, Yātudhānīs and Kuṣmāṇḍas are the greatest enemies of children, and the evil spirits like Bhūtas, Pretas, Piśācas, Yakṣas, Rākṣasas and Vināyakas, as well as witches like Koṭarā, Revatī, Jyeṣṭhā, Pūtanā and Mātṛkā, are always ready to give trouble to the body, the life air and the senses, causing loss of memory, madness and bad dreams. Like the most experienced evil stars, they all create great disturbances, especially for children, but one can vanquish them simply by uttering Lord Viṣṇu's name, for when Lord Viṣṇu's name resounds, all of them become afraid and go away.

Credits: Translation adapted from http://www.vedabase.com/en/sb/10

madhusUdan sarasvatI in his gItA commentary while explaining where the worshippers of ghosts, pitR-s etc go have given all names including vinAyaka and mAtrikA in plural. They are groups of entities which have lower status then demi-gods or devatA-s. Hence vinAyaka is surely not gaurInandan gaNesha, but a group of entities who may harm you or may have malice effects.

Hence taking both terms as plural is acceptable.

Adi Shankara's Interpretation of Shiva (Rudra), Surya, Laxmi and OM in Vishnu Sahasranama

smArta-s and advaitins consider Siva-viShNu-sUrya-laxmI (shakti)-gaNesha abheda. At present, the author is not able to find the presence of names of gaNesha in viShNu sahasranAma. Hence the author is not able prove viShNu-gaNesha abheda. For rest four forms of Ishvara i.e. viShNu-Siva-shakti (laxmI)-sUrya abheda is found in Sankara bhAshya on viShNu sahasranAma

For reference, we can take citations from Vishnu Sahasranama Shankara Bhasya by Swami Tapasyananada in English or Hindi Translation by Gita Pres. Gita Press translation can be found here. Relevant Page numbers are given for easy reference.

Let us take some words or attributes given to Lord Vishnu in Vishnu Sahasranama, which are in general related to Lord Shiva (Rudra). There are some names which are interpreted for other deities like sUrya and laxmI. Let us understand these words as interpreted by our acharya Adi Shankara BhagavadpAda in his bhASya on Vishnu Sahasranama.

The article is divided into the Siva-viShNu abheda, sUrya-viShNu abheda, laxmI-viShNu abhe and praNava (OM) nirAkAra, nirguNa brahman and viShNu abheda.

Siva-viShNu abheda

Lets begin with Adi citing non-difference between Siv and viShNu.

Introductory verses of Vishnu Sahasranama

In introduction, Adi Shankara has given us a way in which the names should be interpreted.

Male Gender has to be taken as Vishnu
Female Gender has to be taken as Devata

Neuter Gender has to be taken as Brahman (distinguished from both above)

Adi SankarAcArya jI continues,

from the verse 11 of viShNu sahasranAma beginning from 'yataH sarvANi bhUtAni' meaning that which is present in all bodies or worlds, the cause of creation, preservation and destruction of world, only one tatva is addressed in the form of (or by the word) 'deva', hence both forms of brahman [formless and with form] is addressed by the word 'viSva' (the word viSva is the first name or attribute of viShNu sahasranAma)

Note: Here, deva does not mean a person but an omnipresent entity.

So, bhagavAn viShNu, as person, deva / devatA, as omnipresent entity (formless but not attributeless) and brahman all point to one tatva. Brahman is both saguNa and nirguNa.

Source: Translation by Gita Press, Page 53

Siva-viShNu abheda in intro verses of viShNu samhasranAma

In padaceda sloka 9, Adi Sankara explains the abheda between jiva and brahman. Adi Sankara also quotes verses from viShNu purANa, bhaviSyottara purANa, harivamSa purANa, linga purANa and other purANa-s claims the non-duality between Siva and viShNu.

In viShNu purANa, IMO, there is only one incidence in which there is description of mahAdeva and kruShNa i.e. in kruShNa-bANAsura samgrAma.

VP 5.33.47-49: [SrikruShNacandra says to mahAdeva ji-] The abhayadAna (boon of being fearless or invincible) given by you implies that it is given by me too. **He Sankara! [please] do not see yourself as different from me. That which I am [i.e. that which is my true nature] is also you [your true nature]** and so are other devatA-s [true nature of other devatA-s], asura-s (demons) and this whole universe including humans. Only those humans whose citta (mind, heart) is influenced by ignorance, they see duality (see everything with bhedabhAva)

Similarly in bhaviSyottara purANa mahadeva ji says - **those who sees me, or brahmA ji different than viShNu, those kutarka-buddhi muDhajana (those ignorant fools having bad logical reasoning) fall below in naraka (hell) and suffer sorrow. And those with duShTa-buddhi (corrupted-intellect / defective intellect), those ignorant fools see I and brahmA ji different from viShNu, they incur sin equivalent to brahma-hatyA (killing of a brAhmaNa, a priest)**

Similarly, in harivanSa [purANa] 3.88.51, maheSavara ji says - you [viShNu] are in the beginning, middle and end of all bhAva (beings). This whole universe has originated from you only **and** also ends in you only.

(AcArya ji continues to quote harivamSa purANa 3.88.60-64)

he janArdana! O omnipresent deva! I am you and you are me. In all three worlds, there is no different (bheda) between us either by Sabda (word) or by artha (meaning).

he govinda! in this world whatever great names are yours are mine too - there is no need to think on this (i.e. there is no doubt about this).

he gopate! (kruShNa), he jagannAtha!, let the worship of yours be mine

he deva! [it goes without saying that] those who dislike / hate you also dislike / hate me. There is no doubt about it.

Later on, the question is asked,

Question: Similar to the worship done by superimposing viShNu in the idol, this [type of worship] will be called as pratika upAsanA.

Here one may think that since viShNu is in all, but this does not mean that Siva is viShNu, i.e. Siva is a part of viShNu, but viShNu is not a part of Siva and hence this type of upAsanA does not indicate (advaita) non-duality. Adi Sankara replies -

Answer: This is not true. By saying this Isvara will become inferior and the meaning of statement will also be distorted. Where the pratika-driShTi (superimposition of any form or symbol on something), it will become unauspicious and that will only be said one time only, like, 'mind is brahman' ,'Adutya is brahman' etc. But here it is said, 'you are me and I am you' in this way the non-duality from both sides / angles is established.

*When is it said, 'I am you **and** you are me', then it confirms non-duality. e.g. if viShNu bhagavAn says that I am Siva', but Siva never says that 'I am viShNu', then one can understand that Siva is a part of viShNu, but when viShNu says, 'I am you **and** you are me', then it confirms non-duality. In the same way, at one instance, viShNu says 'I am Siva, brahmA, etc' and in a separate instance / place, Siva says, 'I am viShNu, brahmA, etc', then this too confirms non-duality. Hence when we find verses like, 'Thou art that [brahman], Svetaketu', then this confirms non-duality. Upanishads always say that there is only one brahman, mostly in the beginning of upanishads. Then this brahman entered into the bodies (universe, different worlds)*

(Adi Sankara continues to quote various shruti-s establishing advaita ...)

There are similar verses which say,

and, 'all this is AtmA only' (Ch. Up. 7.25.2) ' by knowing AtmA all else is known', 'and all these is AtmA only', 'all this is brahma only' etc shruti-s indicate the unity / non-duality

smriti (gItA) also says, '**he pANDava! (arjuna), after knowing it you will not be trapped in moha (attachment), and due to this [knowledge] you will see all the worlds in [your] AtmA and also in me.'**

Meaning is in all upanishads, the unity of ISvara who is [both] xetra (kshetra) and xetraGYA (kshetragya), can be seen.

'Due to which, one is able to see AtmA in all worlds and sees the same [that Atmatatva] established in all different worlds, know that GYAna to be sAtvika'

(Adi Sankara concludes)

In this way, bhagavAn also says that 'advaita-Atma-darSana' is the samyaka-darSana. Hence mind should be stabilized / merged / one-pointedly devoted to Atma-svarUpa Isvara.

Note: *Here and in all above verses, deva, bhagavAn and ISvara is to be taken as AtmA or nirguNa brahman only.*

Further Adi Sankara quotes viShNu purANa 6.7.16 and says,

In viShNu purANa, it is said, 'after the destruction of ignorance, which creates duality, who is going to differentiate between AtmA and brahman, which is always asatya (unreal)?

Source: viShNu sahasranAma, Sankara bhASya, pages 31-35, Gita press, Gorakhpur, Hindi translation.

While explaining verse 10 of padaCeda, **Adi Sankara quotes, 'puruSo vai rudra - Sv. Up. 3.2', meaning there was only one rudra, there was none other'**

Source: page 40

[under construction] - content to be edited.

viShNu sahasranAma begins

Let's understand the interpretation of different names in viShNu sahasranAma Sankara bhASya. There are many names that are important to discuss, but two in names, 27-Siva and 114-rudra, Adi Sankara establishes Siva-viShNu abheda by quoting kaivalya upanishad and Siva purANa respectively. Lets understand meaning of some names as explained by SrI Adi Sankara bhagavadpAda.

Note: Shiva Sahasranama and Vishnu Sahasranama have some common names. The attributes or properties i.e. different names ascribed to Vishnu are also applicable to Shiva. The meaning given by Sri Shankara Bhagavadpada would be applicable to the names applicable to Shiva too.

Note: To be added names of vishnu and their meanings:

57 - krishna - bhagavan vishnu is krishna
58 and 59

211 - dham - jyoti is called as dhama - param brahma param dhama

245 - narayana - where jiva moves, from where tatvas originate and come back

246 - nara -

258 - vishnu - that which is spread everywhere is called as vishnu (#2 is also vishnu)

394 - rama

405 - vaikuntha

406 - purusha

409 - pranava

414 - vayu - prana transforms into vayu --> yoga / tantra

550 - krishna - Krishna is krishna dvaipayana vyasa

650 - hari - remover of samsara

852 - āshrama - REsting or merging place of jīva-s

877 - jyoti - Self Effulgent [svayamprakāsha] - nārāyaNa is paramjyoti, narāyaNa is ātmān

957 - pranava - non-difference between OM and bhagavan

959 - pramāṇaḥ - prajnāna is brahman (prajnānam brahma), non-difference.

960 - prāṇanilayaḥ - Describes 5 prāṇa vāyu-s merging into jiva or jīva merging into Supreme Brahman. Indicates the Ādi Śankara was aware of the Yoga and Tantra principles of rising of Kuṇḍalini via suṣhumṇā. When this happens, it pulls back all the prāṇa vāyu-s from 72,000 nāḍī-s into suṣhumṇā and then rising up to sahasrāra, pierces it and merges in the infinite space above sahasrāra resulting into Self Realisation or God Realisation. Haṭha Yoga texts like Yoga Yajnavālkya and Sūta Samhitā describe merging of vāyu-s into suṣhumṇā and rising of kuṇḍalini through suṣhumṇā nāḍī, passing through chakra-s piercing sahasrāra and merging in infinite space.

05 भूतकृत् bhUtakrut

Sankara bhASya by Gita Press (page 71-72)

In brahmA-rUpa i.e in the form of brahmA, with the help of rajo guNa creates bhUta-s (bodies, jIva-s), hence, is known as bhUtakrut. Or **with the help of tamo guNa, destroying the bhUta-s (bodies) in rudra-rUpa, i.e. in the form of rudra, hence is known as bhUtakrut.**

The next name, bhUtabhrut is explained by SrI Adi Sankara bhagavadpAda as

Credit: Sri Subramanian ji of advaita-L mailing list and owner of Adbhutam Blog

06 भूतभृत् bhUtabhrut

Sankara bhASya by Gita Press (page 72)

With the help of sattva guNa, nourishes (protects, sustains) bhUta-s (bodies, jIva-s), hence is known as bhUtabhrut

From names 05 bhUtakrut, and 06 bhUtabhrut, it is clear that the viShNu is different from the trinity.

23 केशव keSava

Shankara BhASya by Gita Press

Adi Shankara in his BhASya explains the meaning of the word KeSava in three different ways. The second definition is:

KeSava is made up of 4 words

'ka', 'a', 'isa', 'va'

ka = Brahma
a = Vishnu

isa = Mahadev / Shiva / Shankara / Mahesha / Rudra

va = That which one has in one's possession, what is under one's sway. i.e. One who contains in himself - Lord of Creation, Preservation and Dissolution is keSava.

Kanchi Paramacharya upon explaining this statement says: He must be ParamAtmAn

Kanchi Paramacharya also says that in Veda-s and PurANa-s Brahma and Vishnu are referred to as such (ka & a) at many places.

Source:
1. Page: 192, Part 6, The Guru Tradition, Kanchi Paramacharya

2. Vishnu Sahasranama Shankara BhASya, Hindi Translation, Gita Press, Page 75-76

Other two explanations of the word KeSava are:

- The one whose keSa (hair) is called as KeSava
- Then follows above explanation (Ref. Panini Sutra 5.2.109)
- The killer or slayer of demon KeSIkA is called as KeSava. Further acharya cites Ref of Vishnu PurANa 5.16.23

We can connect the word KeSava with a famous SubhAshita-s which forms the essence of veda-s

"Ruchinam vaichitryad rijukutil nana path jusham;
nrinam ekogamyastvamasi pyasamarnavmiti"

"Due to the differences in individual dispositions, people follow different paths, but you are the only destination of all of them, just as the sea is the destination of all the waters"

Akashat patitam toyam sagaram prati gacchati,
sarva deva namaskaram Keshavam prati gacchati"

"All the water fallen from the sky goes to the sea,
salutations to all the gods reaches to the KeSava"

Source

25 सर्व sarva

Translation by Gita Press

Adi Shankara while explaining the word सर्व (sarva - 25) says that the says of the cause or substratum of creation, preservation and destruction of both सत् sat (truth) and असत् asat (unreal) is called as sarva.

Note

This indicates that Vishnu is attributeless NirguNa Brahman

26 शर्व Sarva

Translation by Gita Press

The destroyer of everything (all jiva-s) is called as Sarva

27 शिव Siva

Translation by Gita Press (page 78)

The one who is pure because of absence of three guNa-s (in him) [1] is called as Shiva. 'He is Brahma, He is Shiva', in this way, by showing non-difference (अभेद) between them (all three) [1] , by praising the name of Shiva, etc, it is the praise of Hari (Vishnu)

Or

The one who is pure because of transcending three guNa-s is called as Shiva....

Sankaracharya's commentary, English translation by Swami Tapasyananda (This is not word-to-word translation and contains extra words):

'The One who is Eternally Pure. In Him can never be any contamination of the imperfection of Rajas and Tamas. 'Non-apprehension of Reality' is Tamas and 'misapprehensions of Reality' constitute the Rajas. In the Reality Itself there can be neither of them 'He is Brahma; He is Siva', so the Upanishad declares of the Absolute Oneness, which is Vishnu.'

'One who is not affected by the three Gunas of Prakrti, Sattva, Rajas,and Tamas; The Kaivalaya Upanishad (1.8) says: He is both Brahma and Shiva. In the light of this statement of non-difference between Shiva and Vishnu, it is Vishnu Himself that is exalted by the praise and worship of Shiva.'

Note:

[1] Words in Bracket are not found in original Translation

- *This commentary shows that none of the shapes and forms are true and in reality the truth is non-dual. Lord Brahma represents Rajas Guna, as he is Creator. Creativity is a rajasic activity. Lord Vishnu is preserver. Sattva Preserves. Lord Shiva destroyer, which is tamasic guna. Here destruction means destruction of ignorance as ignorance is tamasic. Tamas Guna is a AvaraNa, which Lord Shiva Removes. After removing Ignorance (agyana, avidya), only vidya remains i.e. Jnana that 'I am Brahman'.*
- *Remover of Ignorance is also called Guru. Hence it is said that Shiva kripa means Guru Kripa. Guru Gita, one is the most revered scripture says there is no difference between Guru and Shiva. Hence it is said that without Shiva, one cannot be free from duality. In other words the work of removing of ignorance is attributed to Shiva.*

Conclusion:

From, names 25-27, it can be concluded that both Vishnu and Shiva (Rudra) are explained as SaguNa and NirguNa Brahman. From name 27, it can be said that Lord Brahma is not different from Lord Shiva and Lord Hari. Hence we can say that there is no difference between the trinity - Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesha. The difference is in the name only नामभेद (nAmabheda). They are given the names in relation to the work which they perform of creation, preservation or destruction. In other words, the one who is creating this world is called as Brahma, and so on. Hence there is no real difference between the two.

38 शंभु Sambhu

Sankaracharya's commentary:

He who brings Auspiciousness- both inner goodness and outer prosperity to His devotees.

Sambhuh is one of the famous names of Lord Siva. By using this term in invoking Vishnu, by its suggestion, it declares that Vishnu and Siva are not two Divine Entities, but they are both manifestations of the One Essential Reality.[1]

Gita Press Translation (page 86):

Since the Lord creates spiritual emotion भावना (bhAvanA) of happiness सुख (sukha) in (the heart of devotees) [2] devotees [the Lord] is called as Sambhuh

Notes:

[1] The second para is not found in Gita Press version.
[2] words inside bracket are not found in original translation in Hindi.

Page 86 in Gita Press, Gorakhpur Publication

64 ईशान ESAna

Sankaracharya's commentary:

"The Controller of all the five Great Elements". When this term is used, Eesvara becomes the Administrator of His own Law in the phenomenal world of plurality. The executive function of His Infinite Will, when manifested through Him, the Lord. Eesvara, is said to function as Eesaanah. Or, the term can also mean One who is the Supreme Eesvara-the Paramesvara.

Gita Press Translation (page 94)

Since he is the controller of panchmahAbhUta-s, he is called as Ishvara

Note:

From BG 13.23, Adi Shankara says Shiva is Ishvara, Maheshvara, as same attribute is given to Maheshvara. Hence Shiva and Vishnu are one and the same. There is no difference between them.

114 रुद्र rudra

Sankaracharya's commentary:

One who makes all people weep, At the time of death or during the total dissolution, the One who makes all weep is Rudrah. From a devotee's standpoint the same term is interpreted as the One who liquidated all sorrows is Rudrah. Bhagavan declares Himself to be "Among the Rudras, I am Sankara –(Geeta Ch. 10, St. 23). According to the Vedic

terminology there are 11 Rudras; this eleventh “Rudra” is called as Sankara: Sam-karoti-iti = Sankarah - “One who blesses all with Auspiciousness (Sam).”

Translation of Shankara Bhasya by Gita Press (Page 104):

One who makes all people weep, At the time of death or during the total dissolution, the One who makes all weep is Rudrah. From a devotee’s standpoint the same term is interpreted as the One who liquidated all sorrows is Rudrah. Or **it may mean that The cause of sorrow (cry) and driving it away is called as Rudra. Siva PurANa says that, 'The name Rudra is the cause of Dukha (sorrow) i.e. dukhaka, because, the Lord removes [1] the sorrow or the cause (hetu)[2] of sorrow, that is why, the cause of everything (परमकारण (ParamkAraNa) Lord Shiva is called as Rudra.**

Notes:

[1]Here 'the Lord removes' can be taken as 'the Lord uproots'
[2] हेतु (hetu) means intention, motive, reason, purpose or even an object. Here it has to be taken as cause

231 सम्प्रमर्दनः sampramardanaH - New

bhagavAn using his rudra and kAla etc vibhUti-s (powers) destroys everything, hence is called as sampramardanaH

Note:
Here, rudra is taken as an adjective and not a person, as kAla is not a person, it is a principle. Destruction is also a quality of bhagavAn. In viShNu purANa [VP 1.22.23], it is said that during each of the task of creation, preservation and destruction, the supreme brahman, called by the name viShNu or nArAyaNa (not caturbhuja viShNu) divides itself into four parts. While carrying out the task of destruction, from one part, rudra is born. This rudra is not Siva. In all the three tasks, one part is common in all - kAla (time). Without time, no activity can be done, nothing can be created or preserved or destroyed. Since kAla is created and controlled by the Lord, bhagavAn or brahman is also known by the nama mahAkAla. Lord Siva is also called as mahAkAla. Though viShNu saharaNAma does not have the word mahAkAla, from various other sources, primarily from viShNu purANa, we can conclude that bhagavAn viShNu is formless brahman and creator of trinity and kAla. Hence the viShNu tatvam or nArAyaNa tatvam or Siva tatvam is mahAkAla too.

VP 1.22.28-29: and in the end [when time for destruction of universe has come], that unborn bhagavAn taking AdhAra (support) of tamo guNa (tamas guna), with one part takes rudrarUpa, with second [part] agni (fire) and form of death, with third kAla and with fourth stays in all bodies and worlds (omnipresence)

bhAgavat purANa explains us the meaning of the word 'bhagavAn'. It is used for both saguNa and nirguNa.

BP 3.32.34-36: Different types of karma-s [as sanctioned by SAstra-s], yaGYa, dAna, tapa, veda-adhyayan, veda-vicAra / veda-chintan [mimAmsA], Atma-indriya-nigrah {Atma is taken as mind, sanyAsa, yoga consisting of various limbs, bhaktiyoga, both types of dharmic actions like renunciation and action done with sakAma or niSkAma , knowledge of atma-tatva (Self / Brahman) and strong vairAGYa – by using all these sAdhana (tools), we can know svayamprakASa (self-effulgent) [that which lights all and which is not lighted by anyone i.e. consciousness is called as svayamprakAS] ***bhagavAn who is saguNa and nirguNa.***

For more details, please visit viShNu and caturbhuja viShNu

234 अनिलः anilaH - New

Is known as anilaH due to not staying (nivAsa, निवास) in [one definite] place or due to being unborn (anAdi, अनादि) is known as anilaH. Or by not being able to be grasped [by senses] or due to any movement is called as anilaH.

**Translation needs to be confirmed. Hindi and sanskrit translation to be added.*

239 विश्वभुक् vishvabhuk - New

That which eats (destroys) or that which preserves the universe is called as vishvabhuk.

Note: *Here, the act of destruction and preservation is carried out by one tatvam - viShNu*

335 पुरन्दर purandara

Since he is the destroyer of the cities of deva-Satru-s (enemies of devatAs- i.e. demons) he is called as purandara. *'vAca.m yamapurandarau ca'* - by this sUtra, [bhagavAn] pANini has used the word 'purandara'

Note: *"The destroyer of the cities." City is the well-equipped field for gathering endless experiences. The three cities through which we generally move about gathering our experiences in this world are the waking, dream and deep-sleep, On transcending the Gross, Subtle and Causal Bodies, one experiences the Self, and at such a moment these three cities are burned down or pillaged or blasted, The same ideal is explained in the Shiva-purana also; accordingly, we can say that He is One who as MaheSvara, performed the destruction of the three cities.*

491 महादेवः mahadevah

Translation by Gita Press (page 180)

By renouncing all bhAva-s (all kinds of manifestations, 3 guNa-s) and being established in his own GYAnayOga, and is glorified by his aiSvarya (prosperity, supreme power), he is called as mahAdeva

505 सोमः somaH - New

In the form of soma (chandra, moon), the one who develops medicines is called as soma. Or by being (staying) with umA [1] is soma is SivasvarUpa.

Note:
[1] Here, soma is split is sa+umA = soma. By staying with umA indicates that it is bhagavAn Siva. soma is bhagavAn Siva only. This verse establishes non-difference between Siva and viShNu. Here both are considered as forms of bhagavAn. umA or haimAvatI as mentioned in kena Up. 3.12 is am embodiment of vidyA. vidyA here means brahma-GYAna, or the knowledge of brahman. Knowlege is not different from brahman. In other words, knowledge and the laxyArtha (final destination of knowledge [which is brahman] cannot be separated. Hence Siva always stays with umA, who is embodiment of knowledge. To further establish non-difference between Viṣṇu and Śiva, we can map #943 laxmī where our āchārya explain the she embodiment of vidyā i.e. atma-vidyā.

bhAgavat purANa and viShNu purANa explains that purusha is the first form of paramAtmA and viShNu is the most nearest form of brahman. By rising beyond three guNa-s bhagavAn rudra is called as Siva or SivasvarUpa. While both viShNu and Siva have unique personality, as tatvam, both are same.

VP 1.22.62: ... O the fortunate one! the sarvabrahmamaya [1] [viShNu bhagavAn] is the foremost among all the parASakti and is the most nearest mUrta-brahmasvarUpa (manifested form of brahman)

BP 8.7.29: ... ***When you arise beyond guNa-s and are established in your Self, then this state is called as 'Siva' (Siva-Akhyam). In reality, it is the same Self Effulgent paramArtha-tatva (supreme consciousness).***

For More details, please visit, viShNu and caturbhuja viShNu

Source and Credits: Shri V. Subramanian ji of Adbhutam Blog

582 शान्तः SAntah

Translation adapted from Gita Press (page 180)

Due to being indifferent to the worldly pleasures, he is called as SAntah. Shruti says (Sv.

Up. 6.19) – Parabrahman is beyond time (KAla), beyond action and is peaceful (Santah) or Paramatman transcends time, space and is peaceful.

Note: *Man. Up. 7 says the same, Santam Shivam Advaitam*

584 शान्तिः SAntih

Translation adapted from Gita Press (page 181)

Renouncing entire ignorance (avidya) is peace (SAnti), this peace is of the nature of Brahman only (BrahmarUpa).

Note: *Man. Up. 7 says the same, Santam Shivam Advaitam*

600 शिव Siva

Sankaracharya's commentary translated by Gita press:

Due to purifying (devotees) by mere repetition of his name (viShNu), [he] (viShNu) is Siva.

Note, here, Siva is generally taken as an adjective and not a proper noun, denoting a personal God, Lord Siva.

Commentary translated by Swami Tapasyananda (contains extra words, not word-by-word translation)

Lord Narayana is adored here as Sivah and, at the same time, all Vaishnavites repeat Vishnu- sahasranaama. Human prejudices have no logic or reason. Sri Narayana is Siva (auspiciousness) and there is no difference between the two. "I am the dweller of Vaikuntha, Vishnu. Between us there is no difference," so says Lord Siva Himself. Vishnu is the "Purifier" (Siva), as His names, when chanted, and His form-divine, when meditated upon, become a means of quietening the mind and sharpening our perceptions of the subtler and the transcendental.

Note:

Gita press commentary is the correct 'as it is' translation, as Adi Sankara has not written anymore more than than translated by Gita Press. Extra words are commentary of Swami Tapasyananda on srI SankarAcArya's commentary. Swami ji's commentary is given as it may give more clarity.

651 कामदेव kAmadeva (kāmadeva) - New

By being prayed to fulfil dharma etc purushārtha-s [i.e. dharma, artha, kāma, moksha] is called as kāmadeva. Is kāma and deva also hence is called as kāmadeva.

Note: *Bhagavān Siva is called as kāmeshvara meaning the Lord of desire. Here kāma means desire or wish and not 'sexual desire' as many interpret it to be. This interpretation is supported in the interpretation of the name #kāmī*

653 कामी kAmI (kāmī) - New

By naturally being fully satisfied, [the lord] is called as kāmī

Note: *Here, 'being fully satisfied' means the one who is beyond desires. This interpretation can be explained. Ours is a demanding mind, the more it's desires are fulfilled, the more it demands. The satisfaction is only temporary. By fulfilling the desires, the desires are not uprooted. Only the one who has renounced the desire, that mind can become satisfied with what it has. No further demand arises in mind. Such pure mind turns inwards towards it's source and allows consciousness to merge in this source.*

Another meaning of being satisfied would indicate Lordship.

877 ज्योतिः jyotiḥ - (Viṣhṇu is pure consciousness, Siva as skambha is also pillar of light) New

[The Supreme Lord] Shines or lights by himself i.e. in his own accord, Self Effulgent. Shruti (Mahā. Nā. Up. 13.1) says, 'Nārāyaṇa is the Supreme Light (parama jyoti)'

Note: *Here our Āchārya specifies the name of 'Nārāyaṇa' citing Mahā. Nā. Up. 12.1. The word 'Nārāyaṇa' can be taken as Nārāyaṇa tatvam and also as four armed deity Bhagavān Viṣhṇu. However, in the current context, it is nArAyaNa tatvam. jyoti is the pure consciousness which lights all i.e. which gives the knowledge of all things - movable and immovable. While explaining other words like #941 'anādi' and #942 'bhūrbhuvaḥ', Ādi Śankara Bhagavadpāda has not specified the same of Viṣhṇu or Śiva or Sūrya.*

skambha suktam of atharva veda praises bhagavAn Siva as the supreme brahman, as nirguNa tatvam, as the pillar of light i.e. light of consciousness from whom brahmA and viShNu emerged. This story of pillar without ends i.e. starting or end points is found in linga purANa too.

(Commentary on skambha suktam (44 + 44 stotra-s) can be found here. The author has taken much pains to compose a commentary to reveal the secrets of Lord skambha by interpreting in both microcosm (yogic POV, pinDANDA) and macrocosm (brahmANDa). Commentary is delight to read)

Hence this hymn also cites non-difference between Siva-viShNu as both are 'pure consciousness'.

sUrya-viShNu abheda in viShNu sahasranAma

Some names belonging to sUrya are found in viShNu sahasranAma. Our Acharya has cited non-difference between two forms of Ishvara. Here sUrya is the supreme brahman.

232 अहःसंवर्तकः ahaHsaMvartakaH (About sUrya bhagavAn) - New

Due to being accurately or correctly regulating day, [bhagavAn] sUrya is ahaHsaMvartaka

Note: *Soura suktam also says same thing.*

ví dyắm eṣi rájas pṛthv áhā mímāno aktúbhiḥ

páśyañ jánmāni sūrya – 7

7 Traversing sky and wide mid-air, thou metest with thy beams our days, Sun, seeing all things that have birth.

It is needless to say that soura suktam describes sUryadeva as the God or Gods in verse 10

úd vayáṃ támasas pári jyótiṣ páśyanta úttaram /
devắṃ devatrā sūryam áganma jyótir uttamám // 10 //

10 Looking upon the loftier light above the darkness we have come
To Surya, **God among the Gods,** the light that is most excellent.

553 वरुणः varuNaH - (sUrya bhagavAn is varuNA) - New

Due to concealing or covering it's rays, the evening Sun is varuNa. On this topic, mantra varNa (part of veda-s) says, 'O varuNA ! [please] here my prayers'

Note:

Verse 6 of Soura Suktam of Rig Veda (Soura Suktam is found in Maṇḍala 1, Hymn 50 says):

yénā pāvaka cákṣasā bhuraṇyántaṃ jánāmँ ánu
tváṃ varuṇa páśyasi *– 6*

6 With that same eye of thine wherewith thou lookest brilliant Varuṇa, Upon the busy race of men

Hence we can say that Sūrya is Varuṇa.

varuNa, when taken as a noun is 'Ocean God' or 'God of water'.

aruNa means 'red' or 'tawny i.e. dark yellowish' or 'sun'. It could mean 'evening sun'.

'va', as mentioned in #23 is used for Parabrahman.

Hence it could mean Varuṇa would means 'Sūrya is Parabrahman'

Ocean is vast. Ocean God's quality of 'vastness' could be taken. Literal meaning (i.e. taking varuNa as noun indicating it to be 'Ocean God') is generally not taken as the names in viShNu sahasranAma are adjectives of bhagavAn.

Ocean has the nature to accommodate waters of all the rivers that are flowing in it. Sea water evaporates, forms clouds, clouds rain, rain water flows through land as steams, steams merge in river and river flows towards sea. Sea water finally merges back in sea thereby completing the whole cycle. In other words, sea accommodates it's own water into it.

Morning Sun is like Ocean water that is evaporating i.e. spreading it's rays in all directions. Evening Sun is like pulling back or concealing it's rays within itself.

It seems that shrI Adi Sankara bhagavadpAda is trying to explain Sun's quality of 'accommodation' or 'pulling back' of Sun. Rays in tantra and in yogic texts like Siva samhitA, etc represents jiva-s. If we take this analogy, then Sun represents cycle of creation, representation and destruction. Destruction could mean pulling back of jiva-s into itself. Here Sun is the supreme Brahman.

Another name #658 keSava explains 'rays' as 'keṣa'

648 केशवः keshava - (trinity are rays or powers of brahman - Mapping with sūryadeva) - New

Rays spread within sūrya are called as keshava (kēṣava). By getting associated (combined) with them (rays), Bhagavān is called as keshava. In Mahābhārata it is said that - 'my rays that shine (prakāshita) are called as kesha. Hence all-knower (sarvaGYa), best amongst dvija-s call me Kēṣava'. **Or the powers by the names Brahmā, Vīṇ̣u, (viShNu) and ṣiva are kēṣa. By associating with them Bhagavān is Kēṣava. shruti says, 'having three kēṣa-s' and ' my two kēṣa-s (powers) are within privthi (earth) - VP 5.1.61) - in this statement, the word 'kēṣa' is used as an**

alternative for the word 'ṣakti'. In Harivamṣa 3.88.48 [Mahādevajī] says, " 'ka' (क) represents Brahmā and I am the Lord of all living beings. We both have originated from your part i.e. we are partial manifestations of you [Vīẓṇu], hence you are called by the name Kēṣava'.

Note: *In the name #23 Kēṣava, proper splitting of the word kēṣava is given. The word is split into 'ka', 'a', 'īṣa' and 'va'. These words are representatives of Brahmā, Viṣhṇu, Ṣiva and paramātmān respectively. Hence we can understand that keshava is the supreme brahman, different from the trinity who are his powers, which are called as 'kēṣa' and are represented by 'rays' meaning rays of Sun. Sun is also mapped with supreme brahman and it's creative, preservative and destructive energies are it's māyā or female counter part or dynamic counterpart.*

*881 **रविः** ravi - (Sūrya Bhagavān is ravi) New*

Bhagavān sūrya is called as ravi as [bhagavān sūrya] is holds or accepts all the rasa-s. In Vishnu dharmottara it is said, 'By grasping or absorbing all the rasa-s [he] is called as ravi'.

*883 **सूर्य** Sūrya - (Sūryadeva) - New*

Since [he] gives birth to shrī [shobhā, Sun rays] hence Sūrya or Agnī is called as 'Sūrya'...

Note:
1) Here Sūrya bhagavān is equated with Agnī.
2) Sūryadeva is called as the creator or origin of Shrī. Here, Shrī is taken as shobhā. shobhā means, light, brilliance, splendour, yellow pigment or yellowish like turmeric. Here, shobhā means 'Sun rays'. Earlier, in the name #648 keshava, trinity is said to be the rays or powers of Bhagavān Sūrya, who represents parabrahman.

*941 **अनादिः** anādiḥ - (No Pointing of specific Deity as Bhagavān) - New*

Because of being the 'cause' of everything there is no ādi (beginning) meaning there no cause, hence [he/it] is called as 'Bhagavān'.

Note: *Here, Ādi Ṣankarāchāryajī has not specified the name of any deity like Viṣhṇu or Ṣiva or Laxmī. This indicates that our Āchārya considered Ṣiva-Viṣhṇu-Sūrya-Laxmī abheda.*

laxmI-viShNu abheda in viShNu sahasranAma

While explaining the names of two names #942 bhUrbhuvaH and #943 laxmI, our AchArya has shown non-difference between laxmI-viShNu abheda.

942 भूर्भुवः Bhūrbhuvaḥ - (Appears in Gāyatrī mantra, linked with next name #943 Laxmī) - New

Support or substratum (ādhāra, आधार) is called as 'Bhū' (भू), 'Bhuvaḥ' (भुवः) means to to support or substratum of the 'substraum of bhūta-s' [meaning, the support of all living beings jīva-s). Hence ' Bhagavān is called as Bhūvaḥ'

Note: *Here too Ādi Śankara Bhagavadpāda has used the word 'Bhagavān' in a common sense and not pointing to a specific deity.*

943 लक्ष्मी Laxmī - (Laxmīdevī is ātma-svarūpa) - New

(the explanation of Bhūrbhuvaḥ is continued with Laxmī) ...

or, it is not just support of earth [and all other worlds], but is also Laxmī meaning Śhobhā is also him (one and same tatvam) only, hence is called as Laxmī. Or 'Bhūḥ' (भूः) of Bhūrkolaka & 'bhuvaḥ' (भुवः) and ātmavidyā (Self Knowledge or Knowledge of Self Realisation), is called as [is known by the name or tatvam] 'Laxmī' only. In Shruti, it is said that - 'O devi ! ātmavidyā is you only'. Or you are the shobhā (splendour, brilliance i.e. power, shakti) of earth and space (bhumi and antariksha), hence Bhagavān Bhūrbhuvaḥ is Laxmī.

Note: *Here our Ācharya has cited non-difference between Knowledge of Self Realisation i.e. Laxmī and Bhagavān i.e. The Supreme Brahman. Just like there is non-difference between Śiva and Śakti, there is also non-difference between Viṣhṇu and Laxmī. We can find non-difference in Kena Upanishad 3.12 where our Ācharya has cited non-difference between vidyā i.e. ātma-vidyā Umā (Haimāvatī, the daughter of Himālaya) and Brahman. In adhyāsa bhashya, our Ācharya has said the same thing, Ignorance is the rōt cause and removal of Ignorance by atma-jnāna is Knowledge. Knower of Ātman is nothing but Ātman itself.*

praNava-viShNu abheda in viShNu sahasranAma

Adi Sankara bhagavadpAda has also cited non-difference between viShNu and OM. OM or praNava represent nirguNa nirAkAra brahman.

957 प्रणव (ॐ) praṇava - (Formless, Attributeless Brahman OM) - New

Is the monosyllable word 'OM' 'ॐ'. Is one with or is non-different from OM, hence is called as praṇava itself.

Note: *Here the non-difference between Bhagavān and formless OM. OM leads one to Nirvikalp Samādhi.*

Common names and some selected names in Shiva Sahasranama

Before beginning, let have some info regarding the practice of Siva (Shiva) worship and the popularity of Siva saharanAma stotra. To begin with, Worshiping Lord Shiva was widely practiced in ancient times and Shaiva sampradayas were very popular and wide spread. This is indicated by as many as 8 versions of Shiva Sahasranama-s available. The eight versions are

Mahabharata -- Two versions nushasan parva and shanti parva versions

Linga Purana -- Two versions verses 1.65.54-168 and LP verses 1.98.27-159

Shivapurana ---- verses 4.35.1-131

Vayu Purana ----- verses 1.30.179-28

Brahmanda Purana ---- Verses(38.1.1-100)

Rudra Yamala Tantra version.

Shiva Sahasranama are found in following texts:

Below is a list of the texts in which Shiva Sahasranama Stotras are found.

1. Mahabharata (Anushasanaparva version)
2. Mahabharata (Shantiparva version)
3. Linga Purana (version 1; chapter 65)
4. Linga Purana (version 2; chapter 97)
5. Shiva Purana (Kotirudra Samhita)
6. Vayu Purana
7. Brahmanda Purana
8. Devi Mahabhagavata Upapurana
9. Padma Purana
10. Skanda Purana
11. Vamana Purana
12. Markandeya Purana
13. Saura Purana

14. Bhairava Tantra
15. Bhringiridi Samhita
16. Rudrayamala Tantra
17. Shiva Rahasya Itihasa
18. Akasa Kalpa Tantra

Source and credits

We will take some of the attributes.

Names of Shiva from the version found in Anushasanika Parva of Mahabaratha

Commentaries on Siva sahasranAma (Shiva Sahasranama Stotra):

Mahabharata Anushasanaparva version: Commentary named "Bharatha bhava pradheepam" by Sri Neelakantha on Mahabharata, student of Sri Sridhara Swami (15th Century).

mAdhva-s accept Siva sahasranAma in mahAbhArata found in aNuSASanika parva, as authentic. KumbhAkonam version of mahAbhArat also contains Siva saharanAma which is same as that found in Maharashtra's Edition. BORI, Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Pune, Maharashtra has published mahAbhArata edition containing Siva saharanAma stotra.

Padma Purana version: By Sri Paramasivendra Saraswati II Swamigal (1539-1586), guru of 'Avadhoot' Sadasiva Brahmendra. (Tanjore Manuscript Library Edition.)

Unknown version: By Lingadhvari (Catalogue of Sanskrit Manuscripts at Saraswati Mahal Library, Tanjavur (Tanjore)).

linga purANA version: By ballAla, published under guidance of Kanchi Paramacharya, translated in Hindi by Swami Shantananda Puri

Selected adjectives (names) of bhagavAn Siva:

Translation by P.R.Ramachander, based on a bhashya (explanation) for this was written by SrI Neelakantha, student of Sridhara Swami called "Bharatha bhava pradheepam". Based on this Sri.N.Subramanya Iyer (lovingly called "Anna (elder brother) by his admirers wrote a detailed interpretation in Tamil which was published initially by the Sarada Peetham, Sringeri. Later they gave the publishing rights to Ramakrishna Mutt of Madras.

Source

Shiva and Vishnu

(Note: The names are not spelled in transliteration)

215. Om Vishnu prasAdite namah - Who has been pleased by the devotion of Vishnu

216. Om YagnAya namah - Who is of the form of Vishnu

340. Om VAmanAya namah - Who came in form of Vamana, an avathara of Vishnu

386. Om PithAmahAya namah - Who is the father of father (Who created Lord Vishnu)

486. Om Maha Nakhaya nama - Who has a very big nails (like Narasimha Bhagavan) [1]

578. Om Urdhwarethase namah - Who has the greatest gods like Brahma and Vishnu as subjects
579. Om JalesayAya namah - Who sleeps on water in the form of Vishnu

621. Om VishNave namah - Who is in the form of Lord Vishnu

638. Om Padma nAbhAya namah - Who keeps the lotus in his belly button/Who is of the form of Vishnu

787. Om Haraye nama - Who is of the form of Lord Vishnu
881. Om Varaya varahaya nama - Who took the form of Varaha(Vishnu's incarnation)

Some more references are

18. Om HarAya nama - Who destroys everything at time of deluge

143. Om RudrAya nama - Who removes sorrows

220. Om PrasAnthAthmane nama - Who is as peaceful as an ocean after tide

368. Om IshAnAya nama - Who conducts everything with attention
369. Om IshwarAya nama - Who spreads everything (all pervading)

753. Om HarAya nama - Who destroys sorrow

[1] In naramsimh pUrva tApaniya Upanishad, narasimha bhagavAn, who has long nails, in another aspect, is said to be Uma-Pati. In this way there is no difference between rudra and narsimha avatar. Later narasimha Uttara tApaniya Upanishad discusses about OM, jIva and Brahman. this shows that Upanishads do not differentiate between Vishnu, Shiva and their formless aspect, which is symbolized by OM. Meditation on OM is always a meditation on formless, NirguNa Brahman.

Shiva and Brahma

387. Om ChathurmUkhAya nama - Who has four faces when he takes the form of Brahma

619. Om DhAthre nama - Who is in the form of Lord Brahma

992. Om Brahma varchasaya nama - Who is the splendorous light of Brahma

Shiva and Krishna

128. Om KrishnAya nama - Who is ever happy

Shiva and Kurukshetra

648. Om Kuru karthre nama - Who created Kuru Kshethra
649. Om Kuru vasine nama - Who lives in Kuru Kshethra

650. Om Kuru bhoothaya nama - Who is the Karma sthana and Upasana sthana at Kuru Kshethra(place of duty and meditation)

Shiva's Macrocosmic form (VirATa SvarUpa)

95. Om Viswa roopaya nama - Who is all the known forms (Refer to BG, Chapter 11 and Shiva Gita, Chapter 7)

Some Qualities of Shiva

94. Om Umapathaye nama - Who is the consort of Uma

487. Om Maha romaya nama - Who has very big hair

488. Om Maha kesaya nama - Who has long hairs in his tuft

489. Om Maha Jadaya nama - Who has bid matted locks

610. Om Ajaikapadhe nama - Who is the one among the eleven Rudras (In Gita Bhagavan says I am Shankara among Rudras. Here Rudra are Pranas, among them Shankara is one of the most important)

611. Om Kapaline nama - Who is the lord of Universe (called Kapala)

612. Om Trisankave nama - Who is the axis for the three qualities of Sathva, Rajas and Thamas

613. Om Ajithaya nama - Who cannot be won by the three qualities

614. Om Shivaya nama - Who is the purest under any condition

642. Om Analaya nama - Who has limitless power

660. Om Kailsa giri vasine nama - Who lives on Kailasa Mountain

661. Om Himavad giri amsrayaya nama - Who possesses the Himalaya mountains

802. Om Trilochanaya nama - Who is having three eyes

805. Om Jada dharaya nama - Who has matted locks

807. Om Visarggaya nama - Who is like a Visarga in the form of Ardha Nareeswara

894. Om Trayakshaya nama - Who has three eyes

752. Om Harinaya nama - Who is white

Shiva and deluge

577. Om Maha krodhaya nama - Who is very angry at the time of destruction

816. Om Gandhapaline bhagawathe nama - Who saves the memories of previous births a time of deluge

817. Om Sarva karmana mukthaya nama - Who makes all jobs(duties) rise up again after the deluge

818. Om Mandhanaya bahulaya vayave nama - Who is the wind which churns life at the time of deluge

Shiva is everything

615. Om Danvantharye nama - Who is the doctor for all diseases (Dhanvantari)

616. Om Dhooma kethave nama - Who is in the form of comet

617. Om Skandaya nama - Who is of the form of Lord Subrahmanya

618. Om Vaisravanaya nama - Who is in the form of Khubera

619. Om Dhathre nama - Who is in the form of Lord Brahma

620. Om Chakraya nama - Who is in the form of Devendra

621. Om Vishnave nama - Who is in the form of Lord Vishnu

622. Om Mithraya nama - Who is in the form of Sun God(Who measures everything)

623. Om Thwashtre nama - Who is in the of Viswakarma, the architect

624. Om Druvaya nama - Who is in the form of Druva star

625 - Om Dharaya nama - Who is in the form of Vasu called Dara

626. Om Prabhavaya nama - Who is in the form of Vasu called Prabhava

647. Om Ye nama - Who is of the form of Goddess Lakshmi (EE the Lakshmi root)

1008. Om Jagathe nama - Who is the universe itself

Shiva as Brahman

364. Om Brahmacharine nama = Who is one with Brahma

385. Om Brahmane nama - Who is very great

413. Om Paramaya Brahmane nama = Who is the incomparable Brahman

1001. Om Parasmai nama - Who is Tureya which is beyond sleep, the forth state of consciousness

1002. Om Brahmane nama - Who is the ultimate truth

1003. Om Bhakthanaam paramayai gathaye nama - Who is the ultimate destination of devotees

1004. Om Vimukthaya nama - Who is completely free of bonds

1005. Om Muktha thejase nama - Who is the light which is detached/Who does not have a body

Shiva as ParamAtmAn

104. Om Paramaya manthraya nama - Who is personification of philosophical truth.

Some other versions of Shiva Sahasranama has names like amukhAya namah, meaning one who has no face i.e. without any form. The meaning of 'amukha' can be 'one who is formless'.

Shiva and Linga

388. Om Mahalingaya nama - Who is the great Linga

389 Om Charu lingaya nama - Who is pretty

390. Om Lingadhyakshaya nama - Who presides over in the form of Linga

Thus, it can be concluded that Shiva and Vishnu are one and the same.

Before Shiva Sahasranama begins i.e. in Poorva Bhaga - Early Part , in the beginning verses Bheeshma says that Mahadev is Parabrahman, he is Purusha and through his power, he makes Purusha and Prakriti active (MBH 13:14:3-6) .

Bheeshma Uvacha:-

Brahma Vishnu suresaanaam srushtaa cha prabhureva cha,
Brahmaadaya pisachaantha yam hi deva upasathe. 4

He is the one who created Brahma, Vishnu and other devas,
He is their Lord and he is worshipped by,
Brahma , devas, ghosts and others.

Prakrutheenaam parathwena purushasya cha ya para,
Chinthyathe yo yogavidhbhi rishibhi Thathwa darshibhi.,
*Aksharam **para Brahma** asacha sadasacha ya.* 5

He is greater than nature and the masculine concept,
He is being meditated upon by great sages who know the truth,
He is the causal universe, cause as well as the effect.

*Prakruthim **purusham** chaiva kshobhayithwa tswathejasa,*
Brahmana masrujath thasmad Dheva dheva prajapathi. 6

He who is the God of gods and God of all beings,
Through his power destabilizes Purusha and nature ,
And creates Brahma out of it.

Source

Adi Shankara Praises Lord Shiva as Para Brahman in Dakshinamurty Stotram

Dakshinamurty (Dakshinamoorty) Stotram is undoubtedly Adi Shankara's work, as it is commented by his direct disciple Surewaracharya by the title 'mAnsOllAsa'. After reading the verses it will be clear that Adi Sankara did considered Lord Siva as Supreme Brahman.

दक्षिणामूर्ति स्तोत्रम्

Dakshinamurthy Stotram

ध्यानम्

मौनव्याख्या प्रकटित परब्रह्मतत्त्वं युवानं
वर्षिष्ठांते वसद् ऋषिगणौः आवृतं ब्रह्मनिष्ठैः ।
आचार्येन्द्रं करकलित चिन्मुद्रमानंदमूर्तिं
स्वात्मारामं मुदितवदनं दक्षिणामूर्तिमीडे ॥

Mauna-Vyaakhyaa Prakattita Para-Brahma-Tattvam Yuvaanam
Varssisstthaam-Te Vasad Rssigannauh Aavrtam Brahma-Nisstthaih |
Aacaarye[a-I]ndram Kara-Kalita Cin-Mudram-Aananda-Muurtim
Sva-[A]atmaaraamam Mudita-Vadanam Dakssinnaamuurti-Miidde ||

Meaning:

1: **(Salutations to Sri Dakshinamurthy) Whose Exposition through Profound Silence is Awakening the Knowledge of the Supreme Brahman in the Hearts of His Disciples**; Who is Himself Youthful ...

2: ... but is Sitting Surrounded by Old and Great Sages who are Devoted to Brahman,
3: The Hands of the Supreme Spiritual Teacher is Forming the Cin-Mudra (gesture of the Knowledge of Brahman) and Whose Appearance is Still and Blissful,
4: Who is Rejoicing in His Own Self which is reflected on His Blissful Face; Salutations to Sri Dakshinamurthy.

स्तोत्रम्

विश्वं दर्पणदृश्यमाननगरीतुल्यं निजान्तर्गतं
पश्यन्नात्मनि मायया बहिरिवोद्भूतं यथा निद्रया ।
यः साक्षात्कुरुते प्रबोधसमये स्वात्मानमेवाद्वयं
तस्मै श्रीगुरुमूर्तये नम इदं श्रीदक्षिणामूर्तये ॥१॥

Vishvam Darpanna-Drshyamaana-Nagarii-Tulyam Nija-Antargatam
Pashyann-Aatmani Maayayaa Bahir-Ivo[a-U]dbhuutam Yathaa Nidrayaa |
Yah Saakssaat-Kurute Prabodha-Samaye Sva-[A]atmaanam-Eva-Advayam
Tasmai Shrii-Guru-Muurtaye Nama Idam Shrii-Dakssinnaamuurtaye ||1||

Meaning:

(Salutations to Sri Dakshinamurthy Who Awakens the Glory of the Atman within us through His Profound Silence)

1.1: The Entire World is Like a City Seen within a Mirror, the Seeing happening within One's Own Being,

1.2: It is a Witnessing happening within the Atman, (the Witnessing) of the Externally Projected World; Projected by the Power of Maya; As if a Dream in Sleep,

1.3: One Experiences this Directly (this Play of Maya) during Spiritual Awakening within the Non-Dual Expanse of One's Own Atman,

1.4: Salutations to Him, the Personification of Our Inner Guru Who Awakens This Knowledge through His Profound Silence; Salutation to Sri Dakshinamurthy.

source

Adi Shankara Bhagavadpada on OM, Shiva and Paramatma in Mandukya Upanishad

Sanskrit commentary by Adi Shankara Bhagavadpada

मा. उ. ७
अन्तःप्रज्ञत्वादिस्थानिधर्मप्रतिषेधः कृतः ।
प्रपच्चोपशममिति जाग्रदादिस्थानधर्माभाव उच्यते ।
अत एव शान्तमविक्रियम्, शिवं उअतोऽद्वैतं भेदविकल्परहितम् ।
अतुर्थ तुरियं मन्यते प्रतीयमानपादत्रयरुपवैलक्षण्यात् ।
स आत्मा अ विज्ञेय इति प्रतीयमान …

Hindi Translation by Gita Press

अन्तःप्रज्ञत्वादि स्थानियों (जाग्रत् आदि अवस्थाओंके अभिमानियों)- के धर्मोका प्रतिषेध किया गया, अब 'प्रपच्चोपशनम्' इत्यादिसे जाग्रत् आदि स्थानों (अवस्थाओं)- के धर्मोका अभाव बतलाया जाता है ।
इसीलिये वह शान्त यानी अविकारी है; और क्योंकि वह अद्वैत अर्थात् भेदरुप विकल्पसे सहित है, इसलिये शिव है ।
उसे अतुर्थ यानी तुरीय मानते है; क्योंकि यह प्रतीत होनेवाले पूर्वक्त तीन पादोंसे विलक्षण है ।
वही आत्मा है और वही ज्ञातत्व है । …

Page 573 in ईशादि नौ उपनिषद्

English Translation

The ones who have ego of dharma or attributes of three states of consciousness (waking, etc), their dharma-s are negated (prohibited), now

By saying 'PrapaccOpaSamam' etc, the absence of dharma of waking state, etc are being told.

This is the reason why he is शान्त (Santa, peaceful) meaning he is अविकारी (avikAri, without any change); and since it is अद्वैत (advaita, non-dual) meaning free from duality of difference, hence he is शिव (Siva)

He is believed to be the forth state तुर्य (turya); because this extraordinary forth state is different from the three पाद (pAda-s) i.e. अ-उ-म् (A-U-M) (in earlier verses). This is आत्मा (Atman), and only he is fit to be known (worthy of knowing) (ज्ञातव्य, JnAtavya)

Note:

This verses gives us unity of Shiva and Atman

Another verse will make things more clear.

Adi Shankaracharya's commentary on G.K. 1.29, which comes after Man. Up. 12

Sanskrit commentary by Adi Shankara Bhagavadpada (page 596)

सर्वद्वैतोपशमत्वादेव शिवः ।
ओङ्कारो यथा व्याख्यातो विदितो येन स परमार्थतत्वस्य मननान्मुनिः ।

Hindi Translation by Gita Press

सम्पूर्ण द्वैतका उपशमस्थान होनेके कारण ही वह शिव (मंगलमय) है । इस प्रकार व्याख्या किया हुआ ओङ्कार जिसने जाना है वही परमार्थतत्वका मनन करनेवाला होनेसे 'मुनि' है …

English Translation

Due to the very reason of being the substratum of the entire duality (universe) he is Shiva (the auspiciousness). Only the one who knows (realizes) OM, in the way it is defined here, is the contemplator of the Supreme Brahman, and due to this reason, only he is called as 'Muni', the great seer, great saint.

Here one may argue that the word denotes 'pure consciousness' or 'auspiciousness'. Hence this does not refer to 'Siva' as one of the trinity. This is true. However, let us understand the meaning of the word Siva in bhAgavat purANa.

Verse BP 8.7.29 defines Siva as a state of consciousness

BP 8.7.29: sadyojAta etc five vedic mantras are represented by your five faces [1], from which 38 celebrated vedic mantra-s are created. **When you arise beyond guNa-s and are established in your Self, then this state is called as 'Siva' (Siva-Akhyam). In reality, it is the same Self Effulgent paramArtha-tatva (supreme consciousness).**

[1] Five vedic mantra-s are (1) *puruSa,* (2) *aghora,* (3) *sadyojAta,* (4) *vAmadeva,* and (5) *ISAna*

We must note that here the five forms of Siva are eulogized. This means the first part of verse is referring to Siva or rudra as a person or personality and the supreme Godhead from whom 38 celebrated mantra-s are created. The attribution of lordship is also given in earlier verses.

BP 8.7.24: **O prabhu! (O lord) with the help of your own illusive power which consists of three guNa-s, you creation, preserve and destroy this world; though you are one, you manifest (appear) as brahmA, viShNu and Siva.**

Coming back to verse BP 8.7.29, the second half of verse says that when one rises beyond and are established in your Self, then this state is 'Siva'. This is the same effulgent paramAtva-tatva i.e. supreme consciousness or supreme Brahman.

Now one may understand that Siva, can be a jIva who realizes his true nature and becomes Brahman by rising beyond guNa-s. This argument is not correct. There are verses from the same samudra-manthana episode which treat Siva as creator, granter of moksha and as antaryAmI, the inner Self of all including devatA-s (demi-gods).

BP 8.7.21: O deva of devatatA-s mahAdeva! you are the AtmA of all beings and are the life saver of all. We all have come to your refuge. Please save us from this deadly poison which otherwise destroy the whole universe.

BP 8.7.22: Only you are capable of liberating and giving bondage of the world(s). Hence wise persons worship only you, as you are the remover of sorrows of those who have taken refuge in you and are jagadguru (world teacher)

BP 8.7.24: **O prabhu! (O lord) with the help of your own illusive power which consists of three guNa-s, you creation, preserve and destroy this world; though you are one, you manifest (appear) as brahmA, viShNu and Siva.**

BP 8.7.25: **You are self effulgent, the reason for this [being self effulgent] is that you are the deeply mysterious brahma-tatva. You are the life giver of all devatA-s, humans, animals, birds, etc whatever is real or unreal, living / moving or non-moving. There is no creation which is not you** (i.e. Siva is present in all living and non-living and Siva is everything. Nothing exists that is not Siva)**; because, you are everybody's AtmA. By various types of energies (Sakti-s) you are manifested as this world; because you are ISvara and are all-powerful.**

Hence if one accepts a theory of vishiShTAdvaita (विशिष्टाद्वैत) which is - jIva is qualitatively same as Brahman, but quantitatively different than Brahman, then this is not true in this case. This theory says, that as nirguNa brahman, Siva or any jIva can be Brahman, but on vyavahArika level i.e. w.r.t empirical reality, viShNu holds position of saguNa Brahman i.e. Ishvara. AS we undersand from the above verses from the revered bhAgavat purANa, Siva is not any jIva, he is both saguNa and nirguNa Brahman.

An advaitin who believes in only viShNu as being capable of being both saguNa and nirguNa Brahman, the above verses contradict the claim. viShNu, like Siva can be formless. Both words denote same meaning. viShNu means 'all-pervading' and Siva means 'in which all things lie'. Infact the non-difference between the meaning of both names Siva and viShNu is quoted by our AchArya who cites harivamSa purANa 3.88.60-64

he janArdana! O omnipresent deva! **I am you and you are me**. In all three worlds, **there is no difference (bheda) between us either by Sabda (word) or by artha (meaning).**
- harivamSa purANa 3.88.60-64

As said earlier, for an advaitin, viShNu can be both saguNa and nirguNa. When Adi Sankara refers to viShNu, it does not necessarily mean saguNa Brahman i.e. caturbhuja viShNu. Since the name viShNu is used commonly for both Brahman-s there are some who claim that Adi Sankara considered only caturbhuja viShNu as Ishvara (saguNa Brahman) on vyavahArika plane. Whereas, in case, Adi Sankara refers to the word Siva, it is always, sat-chit-Ananda Atman and not trishula dhArI Sankara bhagavAn.

In this case, it is worth nothing that when viShNu refers to nirguNa Brahman, it is none other than sat-chit-Ananda Atman. Hence use of any word Siva or viShNu does not make any difference. Since Adi Sankara's IshTa-devatA is viShNu, it is natural for him to refer to Brahman as viShNu.

Another argument is that, some do not consider that Adi Sankara did not refer to Siva as saguNa Brahman in any of his commentaries. This is not true. We will see further that not only in viShNu sahasranAma, but even in prashthAntrayI bhAshya, Adi Sankara considered Siva s supreme. Adi Sankara has never referred to Siva or rudra as brahmA-pUtra or viShNu-putra.

If Siva is not supreme or if OM is not supreme, then by contemplating on OM, one cannot realize Brahman. OM represents Brahman. The forth state of OM, which is silence, is nothing but Brahman. The three states connected with A-U-M arise from and last in this forth state known as turiyA. OM is controller of everything. OM is the creator of everything.

In mANDukya upanishad, OM is chanted to transcend beyond triguNAtmikA-mAyA. As one transcends mAyA, one realises oneself to be Siva-tatva or Atman or Brahman. Hence Siva is omkAra.

Adi Shankara Bhagavadpada Praises Shiva (Shambho) as Ishvara and confirms non-duality with the Lord

'Shri bruhad Shankara Digvijay' by mAdhava vidyAraNya svAmI, in 6th Sarga sloka 41 says,

दास्स्तेऽहं देहदृष्ट्याऽस्मि शम्भो जातस्तेंऽशो जीवदृष्ट्या त्रिदृष्टे ।
सर्वस्याऽऽत्मन्नात्मदृष्ट्या त्वमेवेत्येवं में धीर्निश्चिता सर्वशास्त्रैः ॥ ६ - ४१ ॥

O Shambho ! from SarIra-bhava i.e. from standpoint of physical body, I am your servant, in that manner, O Trilochana (Lord Shiva) ! from Jiva-bhava I am your part (Ansh) and you are my anshi (whole). O the Atman of the whole jagat (Universe) ! from Atma-bhava, I am not different from you (abhinna, a-bhinna, bhinna = different). In this way, my intellect decides (is determined), in view of all shastras (bruhad Sankara Dig Vijay 6.41)

In simple words:

1. From Sarira Bhava, I am servant of Lord Shiva
2. From Jiva-Bhava, I am part (ansh) and you are whole (anshi)
3. From Atma Bhava, I am not different from you.

Adi Shankara Bhagavadpada explains Namah Shivaya in Shiva PanchAkshara Mantra

(PadmapadAcharya has written short commentary in Adi Shankara's 'Shiva PancAkshara Stotra'. Hence this hymm is authentic.)

यज्ञस्वरूपाय जटाधराय
पिनाकहस्ताय सनातनाय ।
दिव्याय देवाय दिगम्बराय
तस्मै यकाराय नमः शिवाय ॥५॥

Yajnya-Svaruupaaya Jattaa-Dharaaya
Pinaaka-Hastaaya Sanaatanaaya |
Divyaaya Devaaya Dig-Ambaraaya
Tasmai Yakaaraaya Namah Shivaaya ||5||

Meaning:
5.1: (Salutations to Him) Who is the Embodiment of Yajna (Sacrifice) and **Who has Matted Hairs,**

5.2: Who has the Trident in His Hand and Who is Eternal,

5.3: Who is Divine, Who is the Shining One and Who has the Four Directions as His Clothes (signifying that He is ever Free,

5.4: Salutations to that Shiva, Who is represented by syllable "Ya",

The fifth syllable of the Panchakshara mantra "Na-Ma-Shi-Va-Ya".

source

The one who is eternal is only one, Brahman. Our acharya in Shiva Panchakshara Stotra praises Lord Shiva only and explains the meaning of the PanchAkshara mantra Na Ma Shi Va Ya Namah Shivaya).

Adi Shankara Bhagavadpada in Veda Sara Shiva Stavan praises Shiva as supreme

Veda Sara Shiva Stavan is being accepted by many as authentic work of Adi Shankara Bhagavadpada

ajaM shaashvataM kaarNaM kaaraNaanaaM

shivaM kevalaM bhaasakaM bhaasakaanaam.h .

turiiyaM tamaHpaaramaadyantahinaM

prapadye paraM paavanaM dvaitahinam.h .. 7..

ajaM = ajanma = without any birth

SASvataM = sanAtana = eternal, permanent

kArNaM kAraNAnAM = the cause of the cause

SivaM = Mangal svarUpa = Auspiciousness or of the nature of auspiciousness

kevalaM = the one and only one

(Sivam kevalam can be taken as, whose nature is only auspiciousness)

bhAsakaM bhAsakAnAm.h = Light of the Lights

turIyaM = the forth state or beyond 3 states of consciousness (waking, dream, deep sleep), compare it with forth state of OM, Man. Up. 7, 12

tamaHpAramAdyantahinaM = tamaH, parama, andha hina = above ignorance or the one who is beyond the darkness of ignorance

prapadye paraM = without end

pAvanaM = pavitra = pure or one who is purifying

dvaitahinam.h = dvaita hina.h = with duality i.e. non-dual, one without second

I praise that most holy God,

Who does not have any birth,

Who is permanent,

Who is the cause of all causes,

Who is one and only one

Who is peaceful,

Who is the light of all lights,

Who is the forth state of consciousness,

Who is beyond ignorance

Who does not have either end or beginning,

Who is pure

And who is of non-dual.

Here too the Lord is eulogized as the non-dual Brahman.

Adi Shankara equates Atman with both Vishnu and Shiva in Vivek Chudamani

The authorship of Vivek Chudamani is disputed, though all agree that it is the best PrakaraNa granth and is necessary for every aspirant to study. It fully complies with the advaita philosophy. The poetic beauty makes some to think that it is composed by Adi Shankara. Even though it is considered as written by later acharyas, who hold his name, they will also not preach anything that is against the core philosophy of Adi Shankara's advaita vedanta

Adi Shankara Bhagavadpada in his vivekacUḍAmaNi , 495th śloka says :

nārāyaṇo'haṁ narakāntāko'haṁ
purāntako'haṁ puruṣo'ham-īśaḥ |
akhaṇḍa-bodho'hamaśeṣa-sākṣī
nirīṣvaro'haṁ nirahaṁ ca nirmamaḥ ||

nārāyaṇa I am (o'ham is = aham) , the destroyer of naraka I am. The destroyer of (tri) purā[1] (or the 3 cites of the asura-s; this was tripurāntaka or śiva) I am. The Supreme (īśa) person (puruṣa) I am.

I am whole/complete(akhaṇḍa) knowledge (bodha), the witness (sākṣin) of all (aśeṣa) I am (o'ham). I am not subject to another ruler[1] (nirīṣvaro or nir-īṣvara) ; I am without 'I' (nirahaṁ) and (ca) I am without 'mine' or 'me' (nirmamaḥ).

Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva appear to be different due to mAyA says Adi Shankara in mAyA panchakam

mAyA panchakam sings glory of mAyA, as she is responsible for making the Brahman appear as different identities, makes it appear as if jiva is different than Brahman and infusing the sense 'I am Brahman' and 'I have VairAgya' in the heart of Seeker who is under ignorance. The last verse of mAyA pamchakam says

vidhiharihara vibhedámapyakhaïde
bata viracayya budhánapi prakámam
bhramnayati hariharavibhedabháván
aghaûitaghaûanápaûèyasè máyá.(5)

Máyá which is skilful in accomplishing the impossible deludes, alas, very much Harim Hara, and others, though wise, by introducing the distinctions of Brahmá, Hari and Hara in the unitary reality.

praSnottara ratna mAlikA defines who is the supreme God

The authorship of prashnottara rAtna mAlikA is disputed, with many scholars arguing that some verses may be a later interpolation. However, in any case, it is extremely useful for beginners, and for those who wish to get aquinted with Advaita. We cannot expect that Adi Shankara's successors have manipulated their AcArya's grantha. Even if we say that there might be an interpolation, still they would not have written what is not taught by AcArya. Please find a few verses in which AcArya explains how is Shiva, Hari and Supreme God. Words in bracket indicat the number of quesition.

Praising Lord Shiva

55. Who is said to be the world Preceptor (Jagadguru)? (138)

Lord Shiva .

55. From where one gets knowledge? (Whence Knowledge) (139)

Lord Shiva (ShivAdeva).

56. How can one get Release? (140)

By devotion to Lord Mukunda (Vishnu)

56. Who is Lord Mukunda.? (141)

He who takes us across Ajnana (ignorance).

61. Who is to be contemplated by Brahmana? (159)

Shiva who is in Gayatri, Agni and Surya

Praising Brahman / Self

61. What is there is Gayatri, Sun, Agni and Shiva (160)

It is the reality

62. Who is the Self of all deities (163)

A wise man (BrahmaNa) who is endowed with Knowledge and action

Praising Lord Hari

79. What should be spoken by men?

The name of Hari.

96. What is rarely obtained by man?

Devotion to Hari.

Vedas created from OM

66. From where were Vedas created? (175)

From the letter Om.

Who is the Supreme Godhead

65. Who is the Godhead? (172)

It is Supreme Lord who is (combination of) Shankara and NArAyaNa (SankaranArAyaNa).

Adopting of Double Standards by Rival Schools

Vaishnava-s, while historically trying to prove authenticity of any shruti, consider shruti under analysis as authentic if it is cited as reference by Advaita AcArya-s like srI madhusudan sarasvatI, srI vidyAraNya svAmI, srI appayya dikshita, and other popular commentators like Jnanottam (GYAnottama), sadAnanda, Neelkantha (nIlakanTha), Anandgiri, et al. When it comes to analyzing the core philosophy of Advaita, they separate them from Adi Sankara, saying they they differ the main AcArya from his core teachings. If they could not understand the core concepts, then on what basis the references cited by these revered pUrvAcArya-s make a shruti authentic? Such an argument that other AcArya-s like Madhusudan Sarasvati and Appayya Dikshita deviated from the main teachings is not acceptable. Though they have their own IshTadevata-s and some were performing vedic karma kANDa like appayya dikshita, Advaita never rejects them. The final state is Advaita only. They are only projecting another alternatives as to how one can reach Advaita sthiti by being a worshipper of a deity. In other words they have blended Deity worship with Advaita. Since Advaita does not reject bhakti, but accepts it as an important step for inner purification, these AcArya-s should not be blamed. They reconciled the differences between various sects, thereby bringing in peace and harmony. Once you consider them as an authority over subject due to their knowledge and on other hand, you blame them that they have not understood core philosophy of Advaita is double standards.

As time passes new situations arise which have never occurred earlier. This means finding new solutions without compromising the core philosophy. Saints teach keeping the the then prevailing conditions and circumstances. Hence these people cannot be blamed.

Some say that the son of srI vAllabhAcArya, srI viTThaleSa studied under srI madhusudan sarasvatI. mAdhvAcArya's pUrva pithAdhipati was a eka DAnDI sanyAsin. srI caitanya mahAprabhu was given mantra Diksha by dvaita acharya Ishvara pUrI, and sanyAsa dikshA by a eka DAnDI sanyAsin keSava bhAratI.

Vaishnava-s revere works by appayya dikshita. Vaishnava-s have adopted the naya-mayukha-malika as their manual for study, and the mAdhva-s the naya-muktAvalI.

Non-Duality of Shiva-Vishnu stated by Madhusudan Sarasvati

Madhusudan Sarasvati, a great Krishna Bhakta and an Advaitin has written a dual commentary on Shiva Mahimna Stotra, one praising Lord Shiva and one Praising Lord Krishna, thereby indicating their nonduality.

Sri Subramanian ji, a knowledgeable member of advaita-L mailing list and owner of Adbhutam Blog, has translated concluding verses of the commentary. (Credit and Source)

Concluding verses of Madhusudana Saraswati's Shiva Mahimna Stotra are:

हरिशंकरयोरभेदबोधो भवतु क्षुद्रधियामपीति यत्नात् ।

उभयार्थतया मयेदमुक्तं सुधियः साधुतयैव शोधयन्तु ॥ १

With the benediction that the understanding of non-difference between Hari and Shankara may rise even in those with a lowly intellect have I, with effort, commented on the Shivamanhima stotra verses in dual-meaning mode (as applying to Hari and Hara. Let the noble ones accept this as admissible alone.

भूतिभूषितदेहाय द्विजराजेन राजते ।

एकात्मने नमो नित्यं हरये च हराय च ॥ ६

Obeisance ever to Him who is resplendent with His body adorned with vibhUti, ashes and is of the complexion of camphor (or having the moon on His head), **the One Atman that is both Hara and Hari.**

Here is an excerpt by another knowledgeable member of Advaita-L Mailing List, Shri Anand Hudli ji

Madhusudana Sarasvati has written a masterly commentary on the Shiva Mahimna stotra. A special feature of this commentary is that Madhusudana has interpreted the verses of the hymn as being addressed to both Shiva and Vishnu. He interprets a verse as a praise of Shiva and then goes on to show how it can be interpreted as a praise of Vishnu also. He says: "hari-shankarayoH stutistayorabhedajnAnAya-abhipretA", the prayer is addressed to both Hari (Vishnu) and Shankara (Shiva) to convey the realization that both (Hari and Shankara) are non-different from each other.

For example, in the first verse, last line, the words "stotre hara" can be split as "stotre hara" in which case Hara (Shiva) is being addressed. Madhusudana explains the word "hara" as "sarvANi duHkhAni haratIti haraH", meaning hara (Shiva) is One who removes all sorrows. Alternatively, "stotre hara" can be taken as a sandhi of "stotre" and "ahara", in which case, "ahara" is being addressed. Who is "ahara"? Madhusudana explains: haratIti haraH saMhartA, tadviruddho aharaH pAlayitetyarthaH", hara means Destroyer, Shiva and ahara means the opposite - the Protector, Vishnu. Alternatively, as Madhusudana says:

अथवाऽहः अहो परम्, परा मा लक्ष्मीर्यस्येति तथा हे लक्ष्मीपते।

लक्ष्मीपतित्वान्ममालक्ष्मीं स्वत एव नाशयिष्यसीति योग्यं संबोधनम् ।

Or, ahara means One who has parA or lakShmI. Since He is lakShmIpati (Vishnu, the lord of lakShmI), it is appropriate that He is being addressed as One who destroys the devotee's alakShmI, misfortune or poverty.

Source

Concluding His Gita commentary on 15th chapter of Gita, Sri Madhusudana Saravati says:

vaMshiivibhUshhitakaraannavaniiradaabhaatpiitaambaraadaruNabimbaphalaadharoshhThat.h |

pUrNedusundaramukhaadaravindanetraatkR^iShNaatparaM kimapi tattvamahaM na jaane ||

I do not know any reality other than krishna whose hands are adorned with a flute, whose lustre is like that of a rain-cloud, who wears a yellow cloth,

whose lips are reddish like the Bimba-fruit, whose face is beautiful like the full moon, and whose eyes are like lotuses.

sadaa sadaanandapade nimagnaM mano manobhaavamapaakaroti |

gataagataayaasamapaasya sadhaH paraaparaatiitamupaiti tatvam.h ||

The mind that is ever merged in the state of constant Bliss removes (all) mentations, (and) by eradicating the sorrows consequent on (repeated) births and deaths it attains at once the Reality transcending cause and effect.

shaivaH saurashcha gaaNeshaa vaishhNavaaH shaktipUjakaaH |

bhavanti yanmayaaH sarve sohamasmi paraH shivaH ||

I am that supreme Auspicious One in whom get identified all the followers of Shiva, of the Sun, of Ganesha, of Vishnu, and the worshippers of Shakti.

Source

Even a great Krishna Bhakta highly reveres Shiva. Advaitins do not have any clash with any deities. We consider all deities as manifestations of Supreme Reality.

Non-Duality of Shiva-Vishnu in Suta SamhitA of Skanda PurANa

Great Muni, Sri VidyAraNya Swami (mAdhavAcArya, different from dvaita Guru MadvAcArya), along with his Brother Sri SAyanAcArya, has written authentic commentary on all five veda-s. Sri VidyAraNya Swami has also written a commentary by the name tAtparya dipikA on Suta Samhita, a part of Skanda PurANa. It is said that Suta SamhitA was also revered by Adi Shankara as he read it 18 times before beginning his famous commentary on Brahma Sutras. vdyAraNya svAmI had knowledge of 16 philosophical systems, which he has displayed in his work, sarva-darSana-samgrah. The following passage reflects the core idealogy of advaita.

Here is an except:

"Listen with faith, O sages, to what I say as to the truth of the various paths. Vedas, Dharmasastras, Purana, Bharata, Vedangas and minor Vedas; Kamika and other agamas; Kapala and Lakula in all their variety; the Pasupata, Soma, Bhairava and other agamas with their hundred varieties: Vaishnava and Brahma agamas; the agamas of the Buddhas and the Arhats; Lokayata, and the Tarkasastras in all their vastness; the profound Mimamsa, as also Sankhya and Yoga; all these and many more Sastras, the Omniscient

Divine Being has made in brief. It is only by the Grace of Rudra that Devas like Brahma and Vishnu, Siddhas, Vidyadharas, Yakshas, Rakshasas, Munis and men make the Sastras again, in brief or in extenso. ***The wise say that each of these sastras is intended for a particular class according to the individual qualification, not all for one. These paths are not to be rudely handled by the learned subjecting them to rigorous unrelenting logic. As all streams ultimately empty themselves into the ocean, so all these paths ultimately lead to the Mahesvara Himself. Worshipped in what form soever by people as ordained in their respective scriptures. He assumes that form and takes the devotee on to the next higher step, By His Grace man attains to superior paths. The Divine Being worshipped in the form in which He is represented in these paths takes the devotee step by step onward to the path of the Veda.*** *The form which the Divine Being assumes in the path of the Veda is the immediate cause of salvation. Even there the form of the Divine Being as represented by the ritualistic portion of the Veda only stimulates a longing for knowledge; while, worshipped in the form presented in the theosophical portion He leads the devotee to moksha through wisdom.*

"Thus these paths, laid out as they are by Siva, are all of them true and serviceable. How can Siva be a deceiver? He is supremely merciful, omniscient, and altogether stainless. Yet of all the paths, the path of the Veda is the best. as conducing to all good."

(Skanda-Purana, Suta-Samhita, Yajna-Vaibhava-Khanda, 22nd adhyaya).

This unique attitude of the Purana towards the several antagonistic systems of religion and philosophy only gives expression to the consciousness of the fact that mankind, made up as it is of different individuals who have reached different stages of intellectual and moral progress, cannot all think to order, in one and the same way

Source: Dakshinamurti Stotra With Manasollasa Of Sureshwaracharya Translated by Alladi Mahadeva Sastri. Pages 35-37

Similarly Appya Dikshita also considered Shiva-Vishnu as non-different.

Ganesha is Self Born says Shiva in Linga PurANa

Many believe that Ganesha is the one who is born as hence he cannot be Ishvara. In many stuti-s, like in GAnesh Panch ratna, Ganesha is often connected with OM, he has non-dual, attributeless form and is unborn.

Śiva mentions the following in the liṅga purāṇa

tava avatārae daituānām
vināṣāya mamātmaja
davānām upakārātham
dvijānam brahma vādinām

My view on this sloka (others are welcome to offer their translation):

Maheśvarāya is saying mamātmaja His son (self-born) as the devata on earth avatārae is to bring distress (davānām) to those forces (tava) that stand in the way,or cause distress (as mentioned davānām); it is for the welfare of the the learned/wise (vādinām) , for the twice born (dvijānam) for the brahmin (brahma).

And who is this son (IMHO) it is nā , śrī gaṇeśa-ji . This nā is a noun of gaṇeśa.

Now another view of this śloka is offered by John Grimes, (teacher/author Kodaikanal International School, South India) offers the following translation:

O' my son, this incarnation (avatāra) of yours for the destruction of demons and for the protection of the righteous. Create obstacles for those who go against dharma, bringing them to thier kness and remove all troubles of your devotees who walk the path of dharma.

Ādi śaṅkara-ji informs us of one's Supreme status . This tells us nārāyaṇa (viṣṇu, kṛṣṇa) tripurāntaka or śiva and the Supreme (īśa or īśavara) are the same.

The liṅga purāṇa informs us that His son is Self -born i.e. mamātmaja, śiva Himself.

Credit and Source

In Ganesha Sahasranama, found in Ganesh Maha Purana, There are names like The son of Shiva and Shiva (Pure or auspciousness). The word Auspiciousness which is used to describe Lord Rudra or Maheshvara is always interpreted as the forth state i.e. Atman, as in case of NirvANa ShaTak / Atma ShaTak

Maa Bhavani is supreme in Soundarya Lahiri

The authorship of Soundarya Lahiri is disputed. Yoga was not the central teaching of Adi Shankara may be the reason. But it is well known he he and his Guru both were masters of Mantra Sadhana and Adi Ahanakra Bhagavadpada re-consecrated the Sri Chakra. Adi Shankara also wrote Sub-commentary on Pantajali Yog Sutra. Some believe only 41 verses were written by him, others were added later, while some say entire 100 verses were written by Adi Shankara, but at diferent time, one directly intuited form Maa Adi Shakti, others from his memory. For safety, we will take only first 41 verses.

24
(Management of fear of Bhoothas, Prethas and Pishachas)
Jagat suthe dhata harir avati rudrah kshapayate

Tiraskurvan etat svam api vapurisastirayati;
Sada-purvah sarvam tad idamanugrhnati cha Shiva-
Stavajnam aalambya kshana-chalitayor bhru-latikayoh.

Brahma creates the world,
Vishnu looks after it,
Shiva destroys it,
Easwara makes them disappear,
And also disappears himself,
And Sadshiva blesses them all,
By your order given to him,
By a momentary move of your eyebrows.

26
(Destruction of enemies)
Virincih panchatvam vrajati harir apnoti virathim
Vinasam kinaso bhajati dhanado yati nighanam;
Vitandri mahendri vithathir api sammeelita-drsa
Maha-samhare smin viharati sati tvat-patirasau.

The creator reaches the dissolution,
The Vishnu attains death,
The god of death even dies,
Kubera the lord of wealth expires,
The Indras close their eyes one after one,
And attain the wake less sleep,
During the final deluge,
But you my chaste mother,
Play with your consort the Sadashiva

Here, Maa Adi Shakti is considered as supreme Godhead.

After going through the interpretations by our acharya and his various hymms, let us take pramANa from upanishad, which is authentic and commented by Advaita and Vaishnava acharyas.

Shiva-Vishnu (Narasimha) abheda in Narasimha Purva Tapaniya Upanishad

.... In another of his aspects he is Umapathi (husband of Uma) and Pasupathi (Lord of all beings) ...

Source

Shiva-Vishnu (Narasimha) abheda in Narasimha Uttara Tapaniya Upanishad

Third Chapter

Meditate deeply on Pranava (Om) in the form of Chidagni (The fire within) which is in Agni Mandala (Orbit of fire) of the Mooladhara, in the Maha Peeta (consisting of 4, 7 and 32 petal lotus) with its family of four worlds (Earth, atmosphere, heavens and moon world) and seven souls (Loka-Veda-Devatha-Gana-Chanda-Agni-Vyahruthi). Then **meditate**

on letter Aa which is the Chaturathma (4 souls) **and the Sapthathma (seven souls) as Brahma in the belly (Mani Pooraka**),

on letter Uu as Vishnu in the heart (Aanahatha),

on letter Ma as Rudra in the middle of eyelids (Aagna),

on the dot (chandrabindu) which is the happy nectar form of the soul of Omkara (Sound of Om) in Dwadasantha (just above the eyes) and the soul (Athma) in the form of sound in Shodasantha.

Thus after worshipping with nectar (Ananda Amrutha) the four fold Brahmas (Devatha, Teacher, Mantra and the soul), Vishnu, Rudra separately and then together in the form of Linga with offerings and then unifying the linga forms in the Atma Jyothi (Light of the soul) and filling up the macro, micro and causal bodies with this light, we have to unify Atma Jyothi which is their basis with macro, micro, root and witness properties. Afterwards adjust the very gross Virat form in the very micro Hiranyagarbha form, and this micro form in the great causal Iswara form and after arranging the mantras similarly, and meditating on "Otha-Anuj-Jnathru-Anugna-Avikalpa" stages, and merging all this in to the Omkara (sound of Om) in Thuriya, we have to reach the Nirvikalpa Paramathma (formless great truth).

Fourth Chapter

Thus the soul should be meditated upon nine times as the Omkara form of Para Brahma with thuriya pranava sound. ...

The other alternative is to pray Lord Narasimha using the Anushtup Mantra. He (Narasimha) who is God exists as a human being and also as soul of every one for all times and every where, and also as one who destroys attachments and also as God of the universe. He is the soul of Thuriya. **Believing he is yourself, the one who practices yoga should meditate on the Omkara Brahman.**

He is the great sage who serves God, who establishes the lion with its fame, **after mutually attracting Viswa, Thaijasa and Pragna who are like the sons of Atma with Pranava which has been pointed out as the bull of Vedas, after making them**

without separate identity and finishing them in Sakshi Chaithanya and afterwards kill the darkness of ignorance using the fame of the lion.

That devotee who after saluting Virat, Hiranya Garbha and Easwara who have been joined in the horns of Pranava and uniting them in the same Paramatma principle and then saluting Narasimha as described above and make him personally present by methods like Ugra (Very angry) and Veera (great hero), would exist in the form similar to Narasimha.

Source

sUrya as brahman in Aditya hridayam

Adityahridayam is a hymn dedicated to sUrya deva described as origin of the universe and from whom brahmA, viShNu and maheSa emerge to do their respective duties. This hymn is found in vAlmiki rAmAyaNa, yuddha khaNDa, Canto 107, is considered as authentic by all.

The essence of this hymn is that when one is depressed, there is lack of motivation, fear of getting defeated, etc, which implies that when one is in difficult situation and mind begins to lose hope and turn negative, at that time, prayer to the almighty, the supreme brahman helps one regain the lost confidence and strength to face the situation.

[Can be skipped]

Traditionally, the hymn if taken literally, starts with disappointment of rAmA that he could not kill rAvaNa. While rAmA was tired of fighting, he saw rAvaNa full of vigour ready of next session of face-to-face fight. In the midst of fierce battle, losing hope and confidence and so losing inner strength to fight rAvaNa, Lord rAmA, who though being supreme brahman himself, has by his own wish endowned himself with mAyA and restricted himself to act within human limits, as he is maryAdA puruSottama, engages himself in some deep thoughts. He cannot vanquish rAvaNa acting as God himself, as rAmA must respect the boon given by Lord brahmA jI that he cannot be killed by everyone except humans inlucding Gods. At this time, rishi agastya approaches him and initiates him into sUrya upAsanA (Sun worship) and teaches him Aditya hridiyam.

After learning this hymn, rAmA, with fresh confidence and strength is eager to fight rAvaNa.

Like all hymns, this hymn too has both saguNa and nirguNa elements in it. sUrya deva as Planet Sun, inner illuminator, Lord of all and supreme brahman, the creator, preserver and destroyer of universe is adorned and is to

To come back to symbolic interpretation, rAmA who is brahman himself represents deluded jIva. rAvaNa is negative quality, mostly taken as ego. When one does not get success in spiritual path and begins to lose confidence, engages in deep thought indicating that s/he is eager to find a solution, a guru approaches him/her and finds a way for him/her. After

understanding the true nature of brahman the path becomes clear. sAdhaka once again regains the lost focus on his goal. Filled with fresh energy, acquired from clarity and studing the nature of brahman, one resumes the inner journey.

[/Can be skipped]

Few verses that describe sUrya deva as brahman are given here. Entire Aditya hridayam can be found here

सर्वदेवात्मको ह्येष तेजस्वी रश्मिभावनः। एष देवासुरगणाँल्लोकान् पाति गभस्तिभिः॥ ७॥

Sarvadevaatmako hyeshha tejasvii rashmibhaavanah.Eshha devaasuraganaa.nllokaan paati gabhastibh. 7

7. He indeed represent the totality of all celestial beings. He is self-luminous and sustains all with his rays. He nourishes and energizes the inhabitants of all the worlds and the race of Devas and Asuras.

एष ब्रह्मा च विष्णुश्च शिवः स्कन्दः प्रजापतिः। महेन्द्रो धनदः कालो यमः सोमो ह्यपां पतिः॥ ८॥

Eshhah brahmaa cha vishhnushcha shivah skandah prajaapati. Mahendro dhanadah kaalo yamah somo hyapaam pati. 8

8. He is Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva, Skanda, Prajapati. He is also Mahendra, kubera, kala, yama, soma and varuna.

Note:

- By mentioned the trinity, sUrya deva is adorned as the supreme brahman,
- skanda is the General of army, the annihilator of foes, negative qualities and so is sUrya deva, the dispeller of darkness of ignorance by it light.
- prajApati-s (in plural) are progenitors of human race and other types of races like race of demi-gods, etc.
- kubera is lord of wealth. sUyra deva is equalted with him indicating that he too can bestow material and spiritual wealth on his devotees. Alternatively sUrya deva is the Atman of kubera.
- mahendra or the great Indra is the king of devatA-s and he controls lightening and cloud formation thus helping in bestowing rain. Indra deva is just another manifestation of sUrya deva
- kAla is the God of time. kAla is not a person, indicating that the real nature of sUrya deva is not saguNa i.e. a sphere where we see daily. No activity can be done without time. Hence creation, preservation and destruction, time has to happen within the realm of time.yama is god of death indicating that sUrya deva is an immortal and has full control over death. Lord yama is also God of justice like Sani deva.
- soma or Moon God is the one who nourishes all, the Lord of mind and bestower of amrit. Here amrit means longer life, healthy mind and bestowing of spiritual energy and rising of kunDalini. Bestowing milk (which represts amrit) is found in some

yoga texts and tantras which say flowing of spiritual energy from crown to mulAdhAra to activate kunDalini.

- varuNa is the god of water. Water is giving life. It has healing properties. flowing water indicates flowing energy or kunDalini.

verse nine also continues also extends the lordship of Sun.

पितरो वसवः साध्या ह्यश्विनौ मरुतो मनुः। वायुर्वह्निः प्रजाप्राण ऋतुकर्ता प्रभाकरः॥ ९॥

Pitaro vasavah saadhyaa hyashvinau maruto manuh.Vaayurvahnih prajaapraana ritukartaa prabhaakarah. 9

9. He is the pitrs, vasus, sadhyas, aswini devas, maruts, manu, vayu, agni, prana and, being the source of all energy and light, is the maker of all the six seasons

आदित्यः सविता सूर्यः खगः पूषा गभस्तिमान्। सुवर्णसदृशो भानुर्हिरण्यरेता दिवाकरः॥ १०॥

Aadityah savitaa suuryah khagah puushhaa gabhastimaan. Suvarnasadrsho bhaanu rvishvaretaa divaakarah. 10

10. He is the son of Aditi (mother of all devatA-s), **creator of the universe**, inspirer of action, transverser of the heavens. He is the sustainer, illumination of all directions, the golden hued brilliance and is the maker of the day.

हरिदश्वः सहस्रार्चिः सप्तसप्तिर्मरीचिमान्। तिमिरोन्मथनः शम्भुस्त्वष्टा मार्ताण्ड अंशुमान्॥ ११॥

Haridashvah sahasraarchih saptasaptirmariichimaan. Timironmathanah shambhustvashhtaa maartandam anshumaan. 11

11. He is the Omnipresent One who pervades all with countless rays. He is the power behind the seven sense organs, the dispeller of darkness, bestower of happiness and prosperity, the remover of misfortunes and is the infuser of life.

हिरण्यगर्भः शिशिरस्तपनो भास्करो रविः। अग्निगर्भोऽदितेः पुत्रः शङ्खः शिशिरनाशनः॥ १२॥

Hiranyagarbhah shishirastapano bhaaskaro ravihi Agnigarbhoaditeh putrah shankha shishiranaashanah. 12

12. He is the primordial being manifesting as the Trinity. He ushers in the Day and

is the teacher (of Hiranyagarbha), the fire-wombed, the son of Aditi, and has a vast and supreme felicity. He is the remover of intellectual dull-headedness.

व्योमनाथस्तमोभेदी ऋग्यजुःसामपारगः। घनवृष्टिरपां मित्रो विन्ध्यवीथीप्लवङ्गमः॥ १३॥

Vyomanaatha stamobhedii rig yajuh saama paaragah. Ghana vrishhti rapaam mitro vindhya viithii plavangama... 13

13. He is the Lord of the firmament (heaven) [1], dispeller of darkness [2]. Master of all the vedas [3], he is a friend of the waters and causes rain [4]. **HE has crossed the vindya range [5] and sports in the Brahma Nadi [6].**

[1] Lord of heaven means he is lord Indra. Lord Indra, though in conventional sense is a demi-God, a devatA and not God, Isvara, in rg veda, he is described as supreme brahman. Here it indicates both identity with Indra as tatvam and as supreme brahman.

[2] Only knowledge can dispell darkness. It sUrya deva is both guru and God

[3] Mastery in veda-s could mean the best guru or the knower of truth or the truth itself

[4] Indicates he is Sun as planet (star). It also indicates his sAxI (sAkshI) bhAva i.e. being witness. Everything happens in it's presence but itself does not do anything to make things happen. Can be equated with supreme brahman.

[5] vindhyA mountain and meru mountain represents the spine and is called as brahmaDaNDa or meru DANDa.

[6] brahma nADI is also known as Atma nADI or sushumNA nADI. vindhyA

Note: When the consciousness is pulled into iDA and pingalA and then enters into suShumnA nADI, and kunDAlini rises from mulAdhAra to sahasrAra chakra, one gets enlightenment.

Here it means that sUrya is kunDalini which is activated in sushumnA nADI and has crossed vindhyA i.e. has risen to sahasrAra chakra, indicating enlightenment, the ultimate non-dual state of super consciousness.

नक्षत्रग्रहताराणामधिपो विश्वभावनः। तेजसामपि तेजस्वी द्वादशात्मन् नमोऽस्तु ते॥ १५॥

Nakshatra grahataaraanaam adhipo vishva bhaavanah. Tejasaamapi tejasvii dvaadashaatman namostute 15

15. **He is the lord of stars, planets and all constellations. He is the origin of everything in the universe and is the cause of the lustre of even the brilliant ones [7]. Salutations to Thee who is the One being manifest in the twelve forms of the Sun [8].**

Note:

[7] The verse indicates all-pervading nature of Sun. Some may connect the all pervading nature as a result of spreading of Sun rays. However Lordship of all means sUrya deva is Brahman, the consciousness.

[8] Verse also mentiones the underlying unity in multiplicity. As said in upanishads, The One Non-Dual brahman creted universe and himself entered into it. In this way, the one became many.

ब्रह्मेशानाच्युतेशाय सूर्यायादित्यवर्चसे। भास्वते सर्वभक्षाय रौद्राय वपुषे नमः॥ १९॥

Brahmeshaana achyuteshaaya suuryaayaadityavarchase. Bhaasvate sarvabhakshaaya raudraaya vapushhe nama. 19

19. Salutations to the Lord of Brahma, shiva and Achyuta, salutations to the powerful and to the effulgence in the Sun that is both the illuminator and devourer of all and is of a form that is fierce like Rudra.

तमोघ्नाय हिमघ्नाय शत्रुघ्नायामितात्मने। कृतघ्नघ्नाय देवाय ज्योतिषां पतये नमः॥ २०॥

Tamoghnaaya himagnaaya shatrughnaaya amitaatmane. Kritaghnaghnaaya devaaya jyotishhaam pataye nama. 20

20. Salutations to he transcendental atman that dispels darkness, drives away all fear, and destroys all foes. Salutations also to the annihilator of the ungrateful and to the Lord of all the stellar bodies.

तप्तचामीकराभाय वह्नये विश्वकर्मणे। नमस्तमोऽभिनिघ्नाय रुचये लोकसाक्षिणे॥ २१॥

Tapta chaamiika raabhaaya haraye vishvakarmane. Namastamo.abhinighnaaya ravaye lokasaakshine 21

21. Salutations to the Lord shining like molten gold, to the transcendental fire, the fire of supreme knowledge, the architect of the universe, destroyer of darkness and salutations again to the effulgence that is the Cosmic witness.

sUryadeva as the supreme Lord, the creator, preserver and destroyer

नाशयत्येष वै भूतं तदेव सृजति प्रभुः। पायत्येष तपत्येष वर्षत्येष गभस्तिभिः॥ २२॥

Naashayatyeshha vai bhuutam tadeva srijati prabhuuH. Paayatyeshha tapatyeshha varshhatyeshha gabhastibhi. 22

22. Salutations to the Lord who destroys everything and creates them again. Salutations to Him who by His rays consumes the waters, heats them up and sends them down as rain.

Note: By showing the natural phenomenon of effect of Sun's rays, his act of preserving the world is shown. Hence he is preserver of the world too.

sUryadeva as sutrAtmA, the one who resides in our heart and is the the lord of sacrifices.

एष सुप्तेषु जागर्ति भूतेषु परिनिष्ठितः। एष एवाग्निहोत्रं च फलं चैवाग्निहोत्रिणाम्॥ २३॥

Eshha supteshhu jaagarti bhuuteshhu parinishhthitah. Eshha evaagnihotramcha phalam chaivaagnihotrinaam. 23

23. Salutations to the Lord who abides in the heart of all beings keeping awake when they are asleep. He is both the sacrificial fire and the fruit enjoyed by the worshippers.

sUryadeva as bhagavAn

वेदाश्च क्रतवश्चैव क्रतूनां फलमेव च। यानि कृत्यानि लोकेषु सर्व एष रविः प्रभुः॥ २४॥

Vedaashcha kratavashchaiva kratuunaam phalameva cha. Yaani krityaani lokeshhu sarva eshha ravih prabhu. 24

24. The Sun is verily the Lord of all action in this universe. He is verily the vedas, the sacrifices mentioned in them and the fruits obtained by performing the sacrifices.

Source and Credits:
Online: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adityahridayam

Book: Adityahrdayam Translated by S. Venkarasubramanyam, Published by Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Chennai.

From the above we can conclude that sUrya worshipped as sUrya nArAyaNa or the supreme brahman in smArta dharma is supported by itihAsa.

Conclusion

Hence this informs me that viShNu = Siva = gaNesha = maa pArvatI devI = OM = Atman = Knowledge (vidyA) = sUrya as (sUrya nArAyaNa)

Different forms, all Supreme, same reality, all are said to have the non-dual, attributeless form in their stuti-s, or sahasranAma.

Our Acharya propagated smArta dharma. Claims of dubious authority about many works cannot be considered genuine due to limitations in the methods of enquiry and lack of intellectual understanding.

Even though some works may not be his own compositions, still they are useful. All advaita works like Stuti, Stavan, independent granths, etc all comply to Advaita philosophy and help us prepare for core philosophy of adhyAropa apavAda or chanting OM and reaching turiya state.

If we refute works just because they cannot be convincingly proved and discard everything that is not written by Adi Shankara, then in case of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, he did not write anything other than 8 instructions. Entire work and philosophy can be questioned. None acharyas have written any autobiography. It is written by his successors and hence can be doubted of being authentic teachings of acharyas themselves.

Adi Shankara not only revived our vedic dharma, but he also united our people. It is said that Panchdev Puja or Panchyatna Pooja, was not started by propagated by Adi Shankaracharya. Kanchi Paramacharya says that he introducted Kartikeya (Skanda, Murugan) as the sixth deva. Some worship six deities, some replace any one deva with Kartikeya.

Hari OM

|| Shri Gurubhyo Namah || || Shri Adi Shankara Bhagavadpada Sharanam ||

|| Om Shri Paramatmane Namah ||

Part VI

Authentic Shastras

AUTHENTIC UPANISHADS AND GITAS

[Updated on 09-Apr-2017, Gave sources of kaTharudra, kaThashruti Upanishad

Updated on 24-Jan-2017, added info about kaTharudra / kaThashruti / kaNThashruti upanishad]

Preface

Pranams.

I could not find any list of authentic Upanishads on internet. Hence I went ahead to create one. For study purpose, one can refer to any shastra or grantha if it is given by your Guru or in general it complements your own path or sect. In shastra-s, shruti is said to be supreme authority. Vedanta or Upanishads form a part of shruti and are often called as jnana kAnDa. Hence Upanishads are revered by all vedantins. However some fact finders and scholars, based on historical evidences claim that not all religious texts containing the word 'upanishad' are actually apaurusheya (unauthored). They claim that some so-called upanishads were created much later and then word upanishad was attached to them to alleviate their status and they were attached to a veda. Unlike some upanishads, not-so-old upanishads do not belong to any extant shAkhA of 5 veda-s (with Krishna and Shukla as the two). They claim that they may be created in some medieval times or even about some 300-400 years ago. Hence one should not blindly accept anything that contains the word 'Upanishad' as authentic and genuine Upanishad. Since Bhagavad Gita is the essence of Upanishads, Upanishads have to be older than the MahAbhArata period. However tracing back to MahAbhArata (often called as 'BhArata') is very difficult as our shastra-s were penned down much later in KAlI yUga.

In this context, let us understand what parameters they consider while judging the authenticity of any upanishad. Some of the factors are mentioned below. While some fact finders are genuine, some do it for not so good purpose. Anyway, we will try to understand this only for educational purpose, as it is good to understand reason behind their claims.

Authentic Upanishads are the ones which are

- Commented by pUrvAcArya-s (AcArya-s of earlier generations)
- Cited as references in commentaries, refutations, objections against rival sampradAya by pUrvAcArya-s
- Listed in the extant SAkhA of veda-s e.g. Maha nArAyaNa Upanishad is the tenth chapter of Taitiriya Aranyaka of Krishna-Yajurveda. However this argument can be countered by saying that two of the Principle Upanishads belonging to Atharva Veda, MANDukya and MunDaka Upanishads, do not show up in the list of any of the known shakha-s. In fact Atharva Veda is almost lost and most Upanishads belonging to Atharva Veda cannot be traced.
- Their writing style in comparison with veda-s and other authentic Upanishads

It should be noted that the classification is very subjective as too many parameters are involved. So it is just a guess work.

It is believed that there are about 223 extant Upanishads. Ideally there are 1180 shAkhA-s of Veda-s. Each ShakhA has at least one Upanishad. Hence, there should be at least 1180 upanishads. However only 1 % of veda-s remain extant. There are only 11 Extant shAkhA-s. ShakhA-s with Authentic chanting may be around 6-7 only. atharva vEda is almost lost. No one in south recites atharva vEda with authentic chanting says kAnchI paramAcArya. Upon intense search they found one Gujarati Brahmin well versed in one SAkhA of atharva vEda. It is said that only Saunaka SakhA is extant. So most of the upanishads belonging to atharva vEda are either lost or we do not know their SAkhA's.

To find authenticity would be after all a guess work.

A word about muktikA upanishad

muktikA upanishad is a discourse between srI hanumAna and bhagavAna rAma. Just before bhagavAna rAma was leaving this world, srI hanumAna asked srI rAma about various upanishad-s and different types of mukti-s like sAlOkya, sAyujya, sAmipya, sArUpya, which can be granted by the grace of srI rAma, but for kaivalya mutki, one needs brahmaGYAna and mANDukya upanishad is enough (it explains meaning of OM - A-U-M). (Different types of mUkti-s are also given in bhAgavat pURANa 3.29.13)

muktikA upanishad lists names of 108 Upanishads serially and lists itself as 108th Upanishad. It categories each upanishad into one category i.e. mukhya (Main / Principle) upanishads, sAmAnya (general) upanishads, Saiva upanishads, vaishnava upanishads, Sakta upanishads and yOga upanishads. Full list can be found here.

I-i-15-17. Hanuman: Rama, sages speak differently: some say there is only one kind of liberation. Others say it can be got by worshipping your name and by the Taraka mantra at Kashi. Others speak of Sankhya-Yoga and Bhakti-Yoga, the enquiry into Vedanta-Vakyas etc.

I-i-18-23. Rama: Liberation is of four kinds: Salokya etc. But the only real type is Kaivalya. Anybody even though leading a wicked life, attains Salokya, not other worlds, by worshipping my name. Dying in the sacred Brahmanala in Kashi, he will get the Taraka-mantra and also liberation, without rebirth. On dying anywhere (else) in Kashi, Maheshvara will utter the Taraka-mantra in his right ear. He gets Sarupya with me as his sins are washed away.

The same is called Salokya and Sarupya. Persevering in good conduct, with mind fixed upon me, loving me as the Self of all, the twice-born gets nearer to me – This is called the three forms of liberation. Salokya, Sarupya and Samipya.

I-i-24-25. Meditating on my eternal form as prescribed by the Teacher, one will surely achieve identity with me like the insects changing into the bee. This alone is the liberation of identity (Sayujya) yielding the bliss of Brahman.

All these four kinds of Mukti will be got by worshipping Me.

srI rAma further says

I-i-26-29. **But by what means is the Kaivalya kind of Moksha got ? The Mandukya is enough; if knowledge is not got from it, then study the 10 Upanishads. Getting knowledge very soon, you will reach my abode. If certainty is not got even then, study the 32 Upanishads and stop. If desiring Moksha without the body, read the 108 Upanishads. Hear their order.**

source

Traditionally 108 Upanishads are believed to be authentic.

svAmI SankarAnanda of ChinmayA mission, while commenting on panchadaSI 7.100 in hindi says,

In muktikA upanishad it is said that vEda-s has 1180 SakhA-s. In that

840 SAkhA-s are related to karmakAnDa

232 SAkhA-s are related to upAsanAkAnDa and

108 SAkhA-s are related to JnAnakANDa (GYAnakANDa)

(Total is 1180)

Another explanation can also be given

21 SAkhA-s belong to rgvEda (Rig veda / Rug veda)

109 SAkhA-s belong to yajurvEda

1000 SAkhA-s belong to sAmavEda

50 SAkhA-s belong to atharvavEda

(Total is 1180)

In karmakANDa various types of karma-s are given and different vEda-s give different instructions, but in upanishads only one thing is given i.e. unity of AtmA and brahma. Hence seeing differences in various upanishads, mumukshu should not get confused . To gain aparOksha GYAna, he must listen to one or more upanishads more than one time from gUrU.

The original verse which svAmI jI is commenting can be translated as

Difference in vEdic SAkhA-s and due to multiplicity of of desires different types of karma-s are prescribed in vEda-s. But one should not doubt about brahmaGYAna given in vEdAnta and one must practice shravaNA. - PanchdaSI 7.100

No official objection against muktikA upanishad

As far as advaita is concerned, no matha, be it chaturamnaya maTha-s (4 main maTha traditionally belonging to Adi Sankara bhagavadpAda), kAnchI kAmakOtI maTha or gauDapadAcArya maTha or any of the Sankara maTha-s (maTha-s associated with original maTha-s like upanishad brahma yOgi's maTha) have raised official objection.

Shringeri maTha often considered as most authentic has also accepted 108 upanishad and has not raised any objections to the authenticity of muktikA upanishad.

It 'line of thinking' was started and propogated by biased and paid members of British East East Company like Max Muller, who in his translation and commentary on principle upanishads titled 'Th Upanishads - Vol 1 and 2' in intro page 83-84 attests views and opinions of another indologist where it is mentioned that Adi Sankara quoted for a late text / recent upanishad 'nArAyaNa upanishad'. Their challenging Adi Sankara is unacceptable. All consider him as an authority on spiritual matters.

Purpose of writing commentaries on upanishads

Great AcArya-s have appeared to uplift paralysed vedic dharma. The purpose of writing commentaries should be

- Giving more clarity on the verse
- Making it easy to comprehend and give furhter insight
- Connect it with other shruti vacan-s
- preserve upanishads in original form
- Write verse by verse commentary to stop further deterioration / interpolation / corruption of upanishads

Careful study shows that there are eetain minor errors even in version of gItA commented by Adi Sankara and rAmAnuja. One verse is added in version of rAmAnuja. abhinavagupta added 16 more verses to 700 verses. This shows that AcArya-s have commented on versions available during their time. verse-by-verse commentary helps in arresting further interpolations and copying errors from old manuscript to new one.

A word about SrI VidyAraNya svAmI

srI vidyAraNya svAmI flourished in 13-14th century and adorned Shringeri pEtha as JagatgUrU. Before sanyAsa, he was known by the name mAdava. He along with his brother sAyanAcAya wrote commentary on all 5 vEda-s (with KraShNa and sUkla as two). Their commentary is considered as authentic by both western and eastern scholars.

He had knowledge about 16 philosophical systems which he has showcased in his popular work among scholars by the name sarva-darSana-samgrah. He along with srI bhArtI kriSNa tIrtha, his predecessor composed drig-draShya-vivEka, another popular work. Other popular works are Jivanmukti vivEka and panchdaSI, often called as manual of advaita, anUbhUti prakASa and famous commentary on sUta samhitA, a part of skanda purANa by the name tAtparya-dipikA. srI vidyAraNya svAmI has also written dipikA-s on 8 upanishads, essence on srI surESvarAcArya's vArttika-s in his vArttika-sAra and has written commentaries on many smritI-s and has written essence of upanishads commented by srI Adi Sankara bhagvadapAda.

But the most famous work is biography of Adi SankarAcAya by the name mAdhaviya-dig-vijaya, often considered as most authentic biography among extanct version of biographies written by other pUrvAcArya-s.

List of his works are as follows

Veda Bhashya-s

- Rg Veda Bhashya
- Krishna Yajur Veda Bhashya
- Shukla Yajur Veda Bhashya
- Sama Veda Bhashya
- Atharva Veda Bhashya

Original Works

- Puranasara
- Parashara Madhaveeya

Kalanirnaya

Vaidyanidana

Panchadashi

Sarvadarshana Sangraha

Vivarana Prameya Sangraha

Dhatu Vrutti

Jaiminiya Nyayamala Vistara

Vaiyasika Nyayamala Vistara

Ashtottara Shatopanishad

Suta Samhita Tatparya Dipika

Anubhuti Prakasha

Jeevanmukti Viveka

Aparokshanubhuti Tika

Sri Yoga Vasishta Ramayana Sangraha (Laghu Yoga Vasishta)

Soundarya Lahari Tika

Lalita Sahasrnama Bhashya

Charana Vyuha Bhashya

Yajna Tantra Sudhanidhi

Shi Shankara Digvijaya (Biography of Sri Adi Shankaracharya)

Bodhayana Sutra Bhashya

Sandyavandana Bhashya

Vartika Sara

Manusmriti Vyakhyana

Devyaparadha Stotra

Vyavahara Madhaveeya

source 1 | source 2

Since muktikA upanishad is considered of dubious authenticity (not so ancient text), and hence upanishads mentioned in it are also not considered authentic by some scholars, lets shed some light on the authenticity of this upanishad.

Ten Major Upanishads mentioned in muktikA Upanishad are also commented by 4 AcArya-s including Adi SankarAcArya.

SrI VidyAraNya svAmI cites Muktika Upanishad (MuktikopaniSat) in PanchdaSI 4.68

The Great VidyAraNya svAmI in his prakaraNa granth PancadaSI has cited a verse from MuktikA upanishad 2.64

दर्शनादर्शने हित्वा स्वयं केवलरूपतः .

य आस्ते कपिशार्दूल ब्रह्म स ब्रह्मवित्स्वयम् .. (2.64 Muktika Upanishad, 4.68 PanchdaSI - dvaita viveka)

O Brahman! The one leaving both darSana (GYAna, knowledge) and adarSana (aGYAna, ignorance), abides only in Self (svarUpa), he himself is Brahman only, not just knower of Brahman.

(in other words, Knower of Brahman is Brahman itself, *Brahmavid Brahmaiva Bhavati, Mund. Up. 3.2.9*). Sri Ramana Maharshi also says the same thing. According to Swami Shankarananda of Chinmaya Mission, who has Translated PancadaSI in Hindi and have commented on it says that this verse occurs in Yog VAsisTa too.

vidyAraNya svAmI also cites that there are other yOga upanishads while explaining the importance of yOga in advaita. This incidates that he was aware of more upanishads of yOga nature, hinting about his awareness of muktikA upanishad.

Still some people do not wish to accept it as authentic, as accepting it means accepting all upanishads. sectarian SampradAya-s worshipping only one deity find it difficult ot accept all upanishads cited in Muktikopanishat

Note: PancadaSI in English (html, pdf), Hindi (archive.org, scribd by Pt. rAmAvatAra vidyAbhAskara)

All 108 upanishads commented by upanishad brahma yOgI

Upanishad Brahma Yogin or Upanishad Brahmendra of Kanchi Kamakoti Math has commented on all 108 Upanishads listed Muktika Upanishad. Since Upanishad Brahman Yogin, which is a cognomen of RAmachandrendra Sarasvati has commented on 108 upanishads he was honoured with this title. Hence at least Kanchi Math considers all 108 upanishads as authentic. Shringeri Math accepts all 108, but study of Principle Upanishads is emphasized. Studying other upanishads is optional and is Self Study.

Upanishads commented by SankarAnanda, bhArtItirtha, appayya dikshita, bhAskararAya and nArAyaNa tIrtha

Since atharva vEda was getting extinct, we see that many efforts were made by pUrvAcArya-s to preserve. SrI Sankarananda, gUrU of srI vidyAraNya svAmI, srI BhArtI tirtha and srI nArAyaNa tIrth, all advaitins wrote commentaries and explanatory notes (dipikA-s) on many upanishads. srI appayA dikshita, a Saiva-advaitin, wrote commentaries and explanatory notes of some upanishads of atharva vEda. srI bhAskararAya, a shakta-advaitin, revived atharva vEda by learning authentic chanting and passing it onto others. srI bhAskararAya also wrote commentaries on many upanishads of atharva vEda.

A list of upanishads commented (dipikA) by srI nArAyaNa tIrtha are given later. There is one more pUrvAcArya by the name of nArAyaNa bhaTTa, son of ratnAkara bhaTTa, who has commented on upanishads. We do not have information about him. srI allAdI mahAdEva SAstrI, curator, founder of Adyar Library on his commentary on Amrit Bindu and Kaivalya upanishad with reference of mANDukya kArikA has written that srI nArAyaNa tIrtha and srI SankarAnanda has written dipikA-s on many upanishads of atharva vEda. Max Muller and Ramamaya Tarkratna has attributed commentaries of 30 upanishads to nArAyaNa bhaTTa.

Other commentators include laxmidhara, author of advaita-makaranda

Vaishnava AcArya-s have also commented on many upanishads.

srI abhinava gupta of Kashmir Saivism, a very unique AcArya, has commented on bhagavad gItA.

Some more details about upanishads

dArA Sikoh (1615-1659), as per king akbara's orders, translated 50 upanishads from sanskrit to persian. Some they his translations and picking of upanishads were based on dipikA-s by nArAyaNa tIrtha, a advaita saint, contemporary of vidyAraNya, SankarAnanda and bhArtI tIrtha.

108 upanishads listed in muktikA upanishad, commented by upanishad brahma yOgI (upanishad brahmendra) were published by Adyar Library.

Some Upanishads of the Atharva Veda have been published. The Asiatic Society of Bengal has published 27 of the Atharvana Upanishads with commentary of Narayana, as also one page of the Garudopanishat.

The Government of Bombay has published eleven Upanishads of the Atharva Veda including the Garudopanishad with (in the case of two of them) the commentaries of Narayana and SankarAnanda. Seven have the commentary of Narayana and the rest are without any commentary.

The Anandashrama of Poona has published a volume containing 32 Upanishads some of which belong to the Atharva Veda, a number of these have commentaries both by Narayana and SankarAnanda.

The Theosophical society have published two volumes containing 40 Upanishads the first of which was edited by Dr. Schrader and the second containing Yoga Upanishads by Pandit Mahadeva Shastri together with the commentaries of Brahmachari. Some of these belong to the Atharva Veda.

Sriyukta MahEsha Chandra PAla published some Upanishads of this vEda in Bengali character with Bengali translations. The Nirnaya Sagara Press of Bombay has published a volume containing the text only of 108 Upanishads which is erroneously believed by not a few to be a complete list. Preference (it may be here observed) has been given to some Upanishads because of the authority which they gained by reason of SankarAcArya's commentaries on them. Doubtless this fact is proof of their authority but it does not necessarily follow that the Upanishads not so dealt with by him are without authority. He may neither have had the time nor considered it necessary to comment upon other vedanta SAstras as did appayya dikshita, nArAyana, SankarAnanda and others.

Upanishads with commentary by nArAyaNabhaTTa

Max Muller in his Introduction on his book, 'The Upanishads - Vol II' has mentioned list of 30 upanishads commented by nArAyaNa bhaTTa. Max Muller on page XI says, "I subjoin a list of thirty of the smaller Upanishads, published by Professor Râmamaya Tarkaratna in the Bibliotheca Indica, with the commentaries of Nârâyanabhatta"

Max Muller Identifies nArAyaNabhaTTA as son of ratnAkara bhaTTA - "There is another commentary on this Upanishad by Nârâyanabhatta, the son of Bhatta Ratnâkara 5, who is well known as the author of Dîpikâs on several Upanishads"

Credit and Source

30 Upanishads with commentary by SrI nArAyaNa bhaTTa can be found in Bibliotheca Indica Series. Books published by Bibliotheca Indica Series can be found on sanskritebooks titled Atharvana Upanishads with Commentary of Narayana – Ramamaya Tarkaratna 1872 (Direct link).

Note: *There are two authors by the name 'nArAyaNa', nArAyaNa bhaTTa and nArAyaNa tIrtha*. Exact dates and commentaries need to be found out.

Recently **Sriram Sharma Acharya** has translated all 108 Upanishads into Hindi. Sriram Sharma AcArya, though a highly respected figure is also revisionist and some of this ideas like allowing women to perform yagna-s, etc are not acceptable to orthodox Hindu-s including present SankarAcArya-s, who follow traditional way of teaching. Yet, to the best of my knowledge, his knowledge about upanishads is not questioned by anyone and many have great respect for him including Karpatri Svami of Joshi Math / Jyotir Math.

Srila Prabhupada, in his purport on Sri Chaitanya Charitramita (CC Ādi 7.108) as listed 108 upanishads as traditional. Though he has written all 108 upanishads, he has missed some upanishads like NArAyaNa Upanishad and Jaimini Upanishad of Purva Mimamsa, cited by Sri Adi Shankara, which is not a part of the list of 108 upanishads found in Muktika Upanishad. Then there are some upanishads like Param Shruti and Paingi Shruti which are cited by Sri MAdhvAcArya, but are not extant anymore. Upanishads not listed in muktikA upanishad are omitted by srIlA prabhupAda.

Nitaaiveda.com has listed about 139 upanishads. Some names repeat more than one time. If we filter the duplicates, then we may end up with some 96-98 upanishads out if which one is NArAyanA Upanishad and other is Sri Chaitanya Upanishad (not universally accepted) are not found in 108 upanishads as listed in Muktika Upanishad. MAybe they have multiple versions of one upanishads or they have commentaries by different acharya-s. It looks like Nitaaiveda has uploaded all the info about veda-s without any discretion, as it contains Mandukya Upanishad with GauDapadAcArya's kArIkA. They must have uploaded it for educational purposes or for studying texts of other sampradAya-s. This is a very good sign and I highly appreciate it.

Note: *after landing on site, Nitaaiveda.com, you will have to search for the word 'upanishads' (without quotes) in the search box on Left hand side. If search box is not visible, then click on any link which will open new page. There is a link on top of page which says, 'Click here to load full tree'. Click it and search box will appear.*

We would not call other Upanishads not commented by any pUrvAcArya as fake or less authentic. To be on safer side, Upanishads that are commented, cited by pUrvAcArya-s are undoubtedly authentic. Not to denigrate other Upanishads, but for convenience, I will call the 'safe Upanishads' as 'Authentic Upanishads'. I call upanishads are 'safe upanishads', as even under strict conditions, not even a verse is interpolated. In this case, ten principle upanishads are undoubtedly authentic as they are commented by many acharya-s.

Please find list of authentic Upanishads.

(Kindly note that this list is not authentic and not exhaustive. If you know any other Upanishad which is considered as authentic, or placed in wrong category, kindly drop me email at indiaspirituality [at] gmail.com)

Ten Principle Upanishads

1. Isha / Isa / Isavasya Upanishad
2. Kena Upanishad
3. Katha Upanishad
4. Prashna Upanishad
5. Mundaka Upanishad
6. Mandukya Upanishad
7. Taittiriya Upanishad
8. Aitareya Upanishad
9. Chandogya Upanishad
10. Brihadaranyaka Upanishad

Other Authentic Upanishads - Part of 108 Upanishads of MuktikopaniSat

1. svetaSvatara upanishad - Commented by Adi Shankara (authenticity of attribution to Adi Shankara doubtful). Still Upanishad is considered as authentic, as Adi Shankara has referenced it in his commentaries.
2. paingala upanishad - cited by Adi Sankara in his brahma sUtra bhASya
3. Atmabodha upanishad - cited by Adi Sankara in viShNu sahasranAma bhASya (page 70, Sanskrit-Hindi translation by Gita Press Gorakhpur)
4. KaTharudra upanishad (similar to kaThashruti upanishad / kaNThashruti Upanishad) #no 83 in list of muktikA's sanyAsa upanishads) - Cited by Adi Sankara in Br. Up. Bh. 3.5.1 (kahola brAhmaNam), quotes katharudra Up. 2. dipikA by nArAyaNa. Refer Notes below after the list.
5. narsimha tApanIya Upanishad (divided into purva and uttara TApanIya) - Uttara TApanIya Upanishad 9 cited by VidyaraNya svAmI in his PanchdaSI.
6. amrit-bindu upanishad - Cited by vidyAraNya svAmI in PancadaSI 4.46, Amrit B. Up. 18, dipikA by SrI NarayaNa and SrI Sankarananda, vidyAraNya svAmI has written dipikA. A short intro from it is published by samata books titled 'THE TAITTIRIYA UPANISHAD' [1]
7. amrit-nAda upanishad - Cited by vidyAraNya svAmI in PancadaSI 4.45, Amrit Nada. Up. 1
8. muktikA upanishad - Cited by vidyAraNya svAmI in PancadaSI 4.68, Muk. up. 2.64
9. maha NArAyaNa Upanishad (different from TripAda Vibhuti MahAnArAyaNa Upanishad) - tenth chapter of Taitiriya Aranyaka of Krishna-Yajurveda
10. kaivalya upanishad – cited by Adi Shankara in Vishnu Sahasranama BhASya and in BhASya on Svetasvatara Upanishad, dipikA by SrI NarayaNa and SrI Sankarananda, vidyAraNya svAmI has cited it in PancadaSI and has written dipikA-s on amrit bindu and kaivalya upanishad. A short intro from it is published by samata books titled 'THE TAITTIRIYA UPANISHAD' [1]
11. KauSitAki BrAhmaNa Upanishad - – cited by Adi Shankara in Vishnu Sahasranama BhASya and BrahmasUtra bhASya
12. JAbAla Upanishad – Cited by Adi Shankara in Br. Sutra BhASya, cited by rAmAnuja, dipikA by nArAyaNa tIrtha
13. atharvaSiras Upanishad – Cited by RAmAnuja and MAdhva, dipikA by Sankarananda[1] and NArAyaNa
14. mudgal Upanishad - Cited as Reference by RAmAnuja
15. tArA Upanishad / Taropanishad – Commentary by BhaskararAya.

16. gOpAlatApani (gOpAla TApaniya) upanishad - Commentary by viSveSvara - cited by Max Muller in 'The Upanishads - Vol II, Introduction'
17. brahma Upanishad - mentioned in Chandogya Upanishad (3.11.3), dipikA by nArAyaNa tIrtha
18. bAhvarica Upanishad / Bahvrihopanishad – Commentary by Appayya Dikshita and possibly by Bhaskaraya. Saubhagya Kanda of Atharva Veda / Rg Veda
19. maitrAyaNIya or maitrI upaniShad - belongs to Maitrayaniya SAkhA of Sukla yajUrvEda - Commentary by svAmI rAmatIrtha - considered among principle upanishads by many scholars.
20. mahA upanishad / mahOpanishad - cited by rAmAnuja
21. subAla upanishad - cited by rAmAnuja
22. gharbha upanishad - cited by rAmAnuja, dipikA by nArAyaNa tIrtha
23. nAda-bindu upanishad - dipikA by nArAyaNa tIrtha
24. dhyAna-bindu upanishad - dipikA by nArAyaNa tIrtha
25. tejO-bindu upanishad - dipikA by nArAyaNa tIrtha
26. yOgasikhA upanishad - dipikA by nArAyaNa tIrtha
27. yOgatattva upanishad - dipikA by nArAyaNa tIrtha
28. sannyAsa upanishad - dipikA by nArAyaNa tIrtha
29. aruneya upanishad - dipikA by nArAyaNa tIrtha
30. brahmavidyA upanishad - dipikA by nArAyaNa tIrtha
31. atharvasikhA upanishad - dipikA by nArAyaNa tIrtha, SankarAnanda[1] and bhASya by ranga rAmAnuja munI
32. prANAgnihotra upanishad - dipikA by nArAyaNa tIrtha
33. Atma upanishad - dipikA by nArAyaNa tIrtha
34. rAma-pUrva-tApanIya upanishad - dipikA by nArAyaNa tIrtha
35. rAma-uttara-tApanIya upanishad - dipikA by nArAyaNa tIrtha
36. sarvopanishat sAra (sarva sAra upanishad) - dipikA by nArAyaNa tIrtha
37. hamsa upanishad - dipikA by nArAyaNa tIrtha, accepted by Saiva and vaiSnava AcArya-s
38. paramahamsa upanishad - dipikA by nArAyaNa tIrtha
39. garuda upanishad - dipikA by nArAyaNa tIrtha
40. sItA upanishad - dipikA by nArAyaNa tIrtha
41. panch-brahma upanishad - commentary by sAyanA and bhaTTa bhAskara, possible dipikA / short gloss / annotations by ranga rAmAjuna munI of viSiSTAdvaita
42. mantrikA (culikA / Chulika) upanishad - commentary by ranja rAmAnuja munI
43. sarabha upanishad - accepted by dvaitins and cited by SaivAcArya-s
44. Siva-darSana upanishad - accepted by SaivAcArya-s, part of atharva veda, Siva, khilA (to confirm association with any khilA of rg veda)
45. Siva-Sankalpa SUkta / Siva sankalp upanishad - part of Sukla Yajurveda, but originally found in the Rigveda, commented by AcArya-s sAyanA, Uvata, Mahidara)
46. tripuropaniSad / tripura upanishad - commentary by bhAskarAya
47. brihad jAbAla upanishad - accepted by Saiva and vaiSnava AcArya-s
48. jAbAli upanishad - accepted by Saiva and vaiSnava AcArya-s
49. kAlAgnIrudra upanishad - accepted by Saiva and vaiSnava AcArya-s

Credit and Source for citing commentaries of nArAyaNa and viSveSvara by Max Muller

Note:

4. katharudra, kathashruti and kaNThashruti Upanishad

Max Muller mentions the name kaNThashruti Upanishad, which is published by Professor Râmamaya Tarkaratna in the Bibliotheca Indica. Ramamaya Tarkaratna has mentioned

the name kaThashruti upanishad (kaThashrutyupanishat). kathashruti and kaNThashruti are same as per Max Muller.

Olivelle in his book 'Samnyāsa Upaniṣads: Hindu scriptures on Renunciation….' says on p.8:

//Some of the later Upaniṣads appear to be expansions of older ones. Others, such as the Laghu-Samnyāsa and the Kuṇḍikā, as well as the Kaṭhaśruti and the Kaṭharudra (which occurs only in SR – Southern Recension), appear to be different recensions of the same text.//

Credits:

Bibliotheca Indica Series,
Direct Link - Atharvana Upanishads with Commentary of Narayana – Ramamaya Tarkaratna 1872

Upanishad No #19 (upanishad list on page 7)
Page no 289.

Olivelle's Samnyāsa Upaniṣads, - Refer Pages, 8, 23 - 25 for explanation about kaTharudra, kaThashruti, kaNThashruti Upanishad
Max Muller's 'The Upanishads', Vol II , - The sacred Texts archives in html format - mentions kaTharudra Upanishad is commented by nArayaNa
Upanishad Brahma Yogin's commentary on 108 Upanishads, -

katharudra Upanishad is found in sanyasa Upanishads

Index of sanyasa upanishad - page 3163 (total pages = 3580)

Katharudra upanishad - pages 3191-3200

Archive.org's UBY's commentary on 108 Upanishads

Katharudra upanishad is classified as sanyasa upanishad, but it does not appear in list of sanyasa upanishads or on shaiva upanishad (page 2750) commented by UBY (Upanishad Brahma Yogin)

List of 108 upanishads pages 526-530 has katharudra upanishad as no 83, but not kathashruti upanishad.

http://www.advaita-vedanta.org/archives/advaita-l/2000-June/001104.html

The author Vishal Agarwal gives list of Upanishads, useful link.

Sriram Sharma Acharya-s collection of 108 Upanishads with Sanskrit-Hindi.

All 3 books in medium quality PDF, kaThasudra Upanishad is found in brahmavidyakhaNda

Hindi Book 108 Upanishads Part 1 (brahma Vidya Khanada) Pt. Shriram Sharma Acharya

PDF contains KaTharudra Upanishad on page 45-50 (upanishad no 9)

https://archive.org/details/HindiBook-108UpanishadsPart-1BrahmaVidyaKhanada - DJVU format.

Note:

108 Upanishads are divided into 3 parts

1. brahmavidyA khaNDa (contains kaTharudra upanishad, pages 46-52, upanishad no 9)
2. GYAna khaNDa (contains kaTha upanishad, pages 50-69, upanishad no 5) - this upanishad is different from kaTharudra upanishad. It is one of the 10 principle uypanishads)
3. sAdhanA khaNDa

108 upanishads translated by Sriram Sharma Acharya are not the same as given in muktika upanishad. For example Sriram Sharma Acharya's 108 upanshads contains nIla-rudro-upanishad in sadhanA khaNDa, pages 105-107

Credits to SrI V. Subramanian ji of Adbhutam Blog - SHANKARA CITES THE KAṬHARUDROPANIṢAD

...and other Sources not mentioned herewith.

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(1) Kaivalya, (2) Svetasvatara, (3) Atharvasiras, (4) Atharvasikha and (5) Kalagnirudra, are called Pancharudropanishats. It is ordained that every devotee of Isvara should recite them daily before breakfast. Source

rAmAnujA did not write bhASya-s commentaries on upanishads but covered their essence in 'Vedartha sangraham'

An unknown svAmI has commented on NrisimhapUrvatApanI−upanishad and NrisimhottaratApanI−upanishad

gaNESa Upanishad / gaNESa atharvaSirSha / gaNapatI Upanishad with TattvaprakASika by TatvavidAnanda SarasvatI published by D.K. Publications / Exotic india (needs to know more info, as Swami ji is a 21st century saint)

gaNESa atharvaSirSha is mentioned in some smriti-s like shankha smriti. Proper reference needs to be found out. gaNESa atharvaSirSha is one of the 5 atharvaSirSha-s, -

gaNapatya-atharvaSirSha, deivya-atharvaSirSha (devi atharvashirsha), Sivya-atharvaSirSha, sUrya-atharvaSirSha and nArAyaNAya-atharvaSirSha

Read online: Panchdev Atharvashirsha Sangrah Gita Press Sanskrit Hindi

Other Authentic Upanishads - Not a Part of 108 Upanishads of MuktikopaniSat

1. Jaimini Upanishad of purva-mimamsa – Cited by Adi Shankara in Br. Sutra BhASya (if extant, yet rarely studied)
2. NArAyaNa Upanishad - Cited by Adi Shankara in Vishnu Sahasranama BhASya
3. Kaula upanishad / Kaulopanishad - Commented by Bhaskararaya
4. TripuramahA Upanishad / Tripuramahopanishad – Commentary by Bhaskararaya. Consists of 16 Riks. Shaunaka Shakha of Atharva veda, Sangkhyayana Shakha of the Rigveda
5. BhAvanA Upanishad / Bhavanopanishad - Commentary by Bhaskararaya / Short Commentary by Appayya Dikshita
6. ArUNa Upanishad / Arunopanishad – Commentary by Bhaskararaya / Commentary by Lakshmidhara (Laxmidhara). Saubhagya Kanda of Atharva Veda / Krishna Yajurveda
7. Advaita BhAvanA Upanishad / Advaitabhavanopanishad – Commentary by Bhaskararaya.
8. KalikA Upanishad / Kalikopanishad – Commentary by Bhaskararaya.
9. Bhaskalamantra Upanishad of Rg Veda, Bhaskala shakha an extant shakha of Rg Veda - Vrittika by unknown svAmI (Unpublished) - sAmAnya Upanishad [2]
10. PArmAtmikopaniShat (pArmAtmika upanishad) - Unpublished, Commentary by unknown svAmI - VaiSnava Upanishad
11. NeelarudrOpaniShat (neela rudra upanishad)) - unpublished, dipikA-vyAkkhyA by NArAyaNa svAmI - Saiva Upanishad
12. Brahmabindu upanishad - dipikA by nArAyaNa
13. KUlikA upanishad - dipikA by nArAyaNa, cited by rAmAnuja
14. KaThasruti upanishad (similar to kaTha rudra upanishad / kaNThashruti Upanishad?? #no 83 in list of muktikA's sanyAsa upanishads) - dipikA by nArAyaNa. Max Muller mentions the name kaNThashruti Upanishad, which is published by Professor Râmamaya Tarkaratna in the Bibliotheca Indica. If we consider kaNThashruti, kathashruti and katharudra as different upanishads, then as per Upanishad Brahma yogin, only katharudra upanishad is a part of muktikA's list of 108 upanishads. Ramamaya Tarkaratna has mentioned the name kaThashruti upanishad (kaThashrutyupanishat)).
15. PinDa upanishad - dipikA by nArAyaNa
16. Hanumadukta RAma upanishad - dipikA by nArAyaNa
17. Sarvopanishat sAra(similar to sarvasAra Upanishad??) - dipikA by nArAyaNa
18. Shatcakra upanishad - dipikA by nArAyaNa
19. SatpraSna Upanishad - Commentary by mAdhvA

[1] SrI SankarAnanda was 14th century Advaitin, Author of Atma PurANa, contemporary of SrI VidyAraNya. Official website of Kanchi Math says he was

Shankaracharya of Kanchi Math (Sri Sankaranandendra Saraswati), while some, including the author of Advaita-Vedanta website, SrI VidyaSankar Sunderesan ji says he was associated to Shringeri Math, as SrI VidyAraNya svAmI has cited him in his PanchdaSI

[2] Adyar Library had published rare 72 Upanishads which are not a part of Muktika's 108 Upanishads under the title of 'Unpublished Upanishads'. The Pundits of Adyar Library categorized them in similar way as done in Muktika Upanishad i.e. sAmAnya, Saiva, Sakta, vaiSnava, yOga and sanyAsa.

An exhaustive list of available upanishads (total 343) is listed here

A separate list of upanishads commented by NarAyaNa is given below. NArAyaNa and Sankarananda wrote dikpikA-s on many upanishads most of them belonging to Atharva veda. Names of BhAratI tirtha and VidyAraNya are also mentioned as combined authors of certain dipikA-s

Note:

- The Venkateshvara Press of Bombay has in the volume named Shiktapramoda included Taropanishad which however is a different Upanishad from that which is here published under the same name though it is possible that what is there and here published may belong to one and the same Upanishad.
- The text of the Arunopanishad here published is a different work from that of the Aruneyopanishad published in the 108 Upanishads of the Nirnayasagara Press.

Authentic Upanishads Commented by SrI NArAyaNa tIrtha

Note: There are two advaita authors nArAyaNa tIrtha and nArAyaNa bhaTTa.

srI allAdI mahAdEva SAstrI, curator, founder of Adyar Library on his commentary on Amrit Bindu and Kaivalya upanishad with reference of mANDukya kArikA has written that SrI nArAyaNa tIrtha and SrI SankarAnanda has written dipikA-s on many upanishads of atharva vEda. SrInArAyaNa tIrtha and SrI SankarAnanda are said to be contemporaries of SrI vidyAraNya svAmI, a 13th Century AchArya.

Max Muller and Ramamaya Tarkratna has attributed commentaries of 30 upanishads to SrI nArAyaNa bhaTTa.

Please find list of upanishads commented by nArAyaNa.

Direct Link: Atharvana Upanishads with Commentary of Narayana – Ramamaya Tarkaratna 1872

1. sItA upanishad [3]
2. Gharbha upanishad [3]
3. NAdabindu upanishad [3]
4. Brahmabindu upanishad
5. Amritabindu upanishad [3]
6. DhyAnabindu upanishad [3]
7. TejObindu upanishad [3]
8. YogasikhA upanishad [3]
9. Yogatattva upanishad [3]
10. SannyAsa upanishad [3]
11. Aruneya upanishad [3]
12. BrahmavidyA upanishad [3]
13. KshurikA upanishad (??)
14. KUlikA upanishad
15. AtharvasikhA upanishad [3]
16. Brahma upanishad [3]
17. PrANAgnihotra upanishad [3]
18. NIlarudra upanishad
19. Kathasruti upanishad
20. PinDa upanishad
21. Atma upanishad [3]
22. RAma-pUrva-tApanIya upanishad [3]
23. RAma-uttara-tApanIya upanishad [3]
24. Hanumadukta RAma upanishad
25. Sarvopanishat sArah [3]
26. Hamsa upanishad [3]
27. Paramahamsa upanishad [3]
28. JAbAla upanishad [3]
29. Kaivalya upanishad [3]
30. Garuda upanishad [3]
31. ShaTcakra upanishad [4]

Source: The Upanishads, Vol. 2 by Max Muller (Introduction)

[3] Part of Muktika's 108 Upanishads

[4] After the list of 30 is complete, MAx Muller also attributes to Ramamaya arkaratna - "We owe to the same editor in the earlier numbers of the Bibliotheca the following editions:

Nrisimhapûrvatâparî-upanishad, with commentary.
Nrisimhottaratâpanî-upanishad, with commentary.
Shatkakra-upanishad, with commentary by Nârâyana.

Lastly, Harakandra Vidyâbhûshana and Visvanâtha Sâstrî have published in the Bibliotheca Indica an edition of the Gopâlatâpanî-upanishad, with commentary by Visvesvara."

shaTcakra upanishad is mentioned in 3rd line after the list is

[Under Construction]

Some Info about Preceptors of Advaita

Appayya Dikshita

Appayya Dikshita was an advaitin by heart. He saw the decline of Shaivism due aggressive preaching by Vaishnava-s. Hence he took the side of Shaivism, threw himself open to challenges and at times endangering his life at the hands of Vaishnava-s. Later he composed hyms on NArAyaNa. He blended advaita and shaiva and the path was known as shaiva-advaita.

BhAskararAya (often called as Bhaskaracharya).

He was a Shakta-Advaitin who revived worship of Sri Yantra and defeated many scholars of Dvaita and Vallabha School. Tripurasundari used to stand on his shoulders, hence he could not be defeated in debates. The then SankarAcArya of shringerI Math blessed him and appointed him as a representative of dharma and advaita.

BhAskararAya was an adept in Sri VidyA, which was mastered by Adi Shankara and his Guru Sri GovindapAda.

BhAskararAya is different from Bhaskara - I and Bhaskara - II, great mathematicians.

BhAskararAya is different from the Vaishnava saint by same name BhAskarAcArya of bhEdabhEda (bheda-abheda) siddhanta

Laxmidhara

Lakshmidhara, the author of the Advaitamakaranda (Advaita-Makaranda), a prakarana work on Advaita Vedanta, has to his credit two other works, namely, a commentary on Srimad Bhagavata and Bhagavan-namakaumudi dealing with nama-samkirtana as a means of attainment of purusharthas and with the meaningfulness of the Puranas.

Upanishads Commented by lahirI mahASaya

1. NirAlamba Upanishad
2. Amrit Bindu Upanishad

3. DhyAna Bindu Upanishad
4. TEja Bindu Upanishad

Note:

The translation is not according to the traditional way and not written in sanskrit, YogirAja Lahiri MahASaya was a siddha and a fully realized being.

Upanishads of Doubtful Authenticity

Upanishads noted below are considered of doubtful authenticity. This means that there is a split opinion among scholars to accept these Upanishads as authentic i.e. ancient.

1. kAli SantaraNa Upanishad (claimed by GaudiyA Vaishnava-s as it contains their mahA mantra – Hare RAma Hare RAma, RAma RAma Hare Hare, Hare KrShNa Hare KrShNa KrShNa Hare Hare). Reason to put under dubious authenticity is that I am not aware if anyone has commented on this Upanishad.
2. rama Tapaniya Upanishad (Some consider Authentic, some do not).
3. gOpAla tApaniya upanishad (according to some scholars Krishna is historical figure. Hence this upanishads must have been written after mahAbhArata, hence it is not authentic)

Note:

Except KAlI santaraNa Upanishad, all other upanishads listed above have been commented by pUrvAcArya. Hence they too are authentic. However, some maintain that Upanishads should be fairly ancient and should be known before at least MahAbhArata. Hence any upanishads related to Krishna must have been written lately, though 'Krishna' word is mentioned in Chandogya Upanishad 3.17.6. The issue is debatable, however, pUrvAcArya-s, who were authority during their days have already written commentaries on these upanishads. Too add to it, SrI NArAyaNa bhaTTa has written dipikA on not just Vaishnava upanishads, but on all types of Upanishads, Saiva, sanyAsa, etc

Fake Upanishads

Allah Upanishad or Allopanishad

This upanishad is considered as fake upanishad by many i.e. it is a creation of man during mughal period.

Saints doubting it's authenticity are Swami Dayananda Sarasvati of Arya Samaj, Swami Vivekananda and another monk of Ramakrishna Order.

Note: There is one more upanishad by the name Shailopanishat. However, I do not have any information about it.

Note: There are several other upanishads which are not listed here. These may be very important for Self Study like annapUrNa Upanishad, AtmA Upanishad, VarAha Upanishad, etc.

Upanishads with known SAkhA-s (shakhas)

(Below list is not written using transliteration)

Credits: This work is compiled by srI Vishal Agarwal ji to whom we are very grateful for sharing it on internet. A discussion regarding the list can be found in advaita-vedanta.org archives. srI Vishal Agarwal ji has given an explanation for adding some of the text which are not considered as upanishads like PuruSa sukta here.

source

Ancient Upanishads of the Veda

I. Shakala Charana of Rigveda

Aitreya Upanishad (2nd Aranyaka of the Aitreya Aranyaka).
Asyavaamiya Sukta (Rigveda 1,164,1-64)
Purusha Sukta (Rigveda X, 90)
Nasadiya Sukta (Rigveda X, 129)
Hiranyagarbha Sukta (Rigveda X,121,1-10)
Vac Sukta (Rigveda)
Mudgala Upanishad of Mudgala Shakha
Galava Upanishad of Galava Shakha

II. Bashkala Charana of Rigveda

Bashkalamantra Upanishad

III. Mandukeya Charana of Rigveda

Bavrucha Upanishad

IV. Shankhayana Charana and Kaushitaki Charana of Rigveda

Kaushitaki Brahamana Upanishad in the Shankhayana Aranyaka
Samhita Upanishad in the Shankhayana Aranyaka

V. Taittiriya Charana of Krishna Yajurveda

Taittiriya Upanishad (Taittiriya Aranyaka prapathaka VII-IX)
Yajniki or Mahanarayana Upanishad (Taittiriya Aranyaka prapathaka X)

VI. Kathaka Charana of Krishna Yajurveda

Kathakamantra or Kathaka or Katha Upanishad
Kathashruti Upanishad
Kanthashruti Upanishad
Shivasamkalpa Brahamana
Katha Shiksha Upanishad

VI. Maitrayaniya Charana of Krishna Yajurveda

Maitrayaniya Upanishad or Maitrayainiya Aranyaka or Brihadaranyaka of Maitrayaniya Shakha (the Charaka Aranyaka manuscript is almost identical to this text)
Chhagaleya Upanishad of the Chhagaleya Shakha
Shvetashvatara Upanishad of the Shvetashvatara Shakha

VII. Vajasneya Shakhas or Shukla Yajurveda Shakhas

Vajasneyi Samhita Upanishad or Isha or Ishavasya Upanishad (Madhyandina and Kanva recensions).
Brihadarnyaka Upanishad (Madhyandina and Kanva recensions).
Agnirahasya section in book X of Shatapath Brahman
Jabala Upanishad of Jabala Shakha
Subala Upanishad
Mandala Brahamana Upanishad
Tadeva Upanishad (in Yajurveda Samhita)
Rudrasukta (In Yajurveda Samhita)

VIII. Jaiminiya or Talavakara Shakha of Samaveda

Jaiminiya Braahmana Upanishad or Talavakara Aranyaka
Kena Upanishad in the Talavakara Aranyaka
Shatyayana Gayatri Upanishad in the Talavakara Aranyaka
Pranagnihotra in the initial sections of the Jaiminiya Brahman

IX. Kauthuma and Ranayaniya Shakhas of Samaveda

Chhandogya Upanishad or Tandya Rahasya Upanishad

X. Shaunaka Shakha of Atharvaveda

Atharvana Upanishad or Mantra Upanishad of Atharvaveda or Mundaka Upanishad
Pranava Upanishad (in Gopatha Braahmana)
Skambha Sukta
Ucchishta Sukta
Prana Sukta
Gayatri Upanishad (Gopatha Brahamana I, 32-33)
Brahma Sukta

(XI - missing)

XII. Paippalada Shakha of Atharvaveda

Prashna Upanishad
Brahma Upanishad
Garbha Upanishad
Samhita Upanishad or Brahma Sukta (Paippalada Atharvaveda VIII, 9, 1-12)

XIII. Atharva Veda Upanishads of Unknown Shakhas or not belonging to any Shakha

Chulika Upanishad *(some refer by name mantrikA, needs to be verified if both are same), as mantrikA belongs to Sukla yajUrveda)*
Mandukya Upanishad
Brahmabindu Upanishad
Nadabindu Upanishad
Dhyanabindu Upanishad
Amritabindu Upanishad
Tejobindu Upanishad
Atharvashiras Upanishad
Atharvashikha Upanishad
Kaivalya Upanishad

XIV. Upanishads whose Vedic Shakha is not known or which do not belong to any Shakha

Shaunaka Upanishad
Arsheya Upanishad

Note: It should be noted that many upanishads commented by pUrvAcArya-s do not belong to any known SAkhA-s

References made by Adi Shankara in Brahma Sutras

A list of References, not restricted to upanishads, made by Adi Shankara in his bhasya-s in Brahma Sutra is believed to be:

1. Aitareya Aranyaka
2. Aitareya Brahmana
3. Aitareya Upanishad
4. Bhagavad Gita
5. Brihadaranyaka Upanishad
6. Chandogya Upanishad
7. Gaudapada Karika
8. Isavashya Upanishad
9. Jabalopanishad
10. Jaimini-Upanishad (purva-mimamsa)
11. Kathopanishad
12. Kausitaki Upanishad/Kausiki-brahmana Upanishad
13. Kenopanishad
14. Paingala Upanishad
15. Mahabharatha - Santhi Parva, Vana Parva
16. Manusmriti
17. Mundakopanishad
18. Nyaya-Sutra
19. Prashnopanishad
20. Rig Veda Samhita
21. Samkhya karika
22. Satapatha Brahmana
23. Shvetashvatara Upanishad
24. Taittariya Aranyaka
25. Taittiriya Brahmana
26. Taittiriya Samhita
27. Taittariya Upanishad
28. Vaiseishika Sutras
29. Vishnu Purana
30. Yoga Sutras

Some more upanishads cited in his Vishnu Sahasranam bhASya can be found here.

Conclusion - A personal opinion

Whether the upanishads are a later day creation, or are ancient, many upanishads claimed to be of dubious authenticity are accepted by legendary AcArya-s and other pUrvAcArya-s who were considered as authority during their days and are still remembered today with reverential attitude. The proof is their commentaries on such upanishads. These AcArya-s were working day and night through the life selflessly for the upliftment of humanity. Their intention cannot be questioned. Even certain texts which are a creation of a great saint are studied. Examples are srI Jayadeva's Gita Govinda, Adi SankarAcArya's and his successors prakaraNa grantha-s, SrI abhivana gupta's tantralOka to name a few.

Hence instead of questioning them or certain upanishads, we should accept them. We need to study all upanishads. There is no need to so they. They all ultimately lead to the same truth.

It is only some so-called-scholars, in a quest to prove the supremacy of their chosen deity will try to attack the rival sampradAya by questioning the authenticity of certain upanishads. Not all people are like them. Let us peacefully proceed towards our goal, from where there is no return to this mortal world. For self study, we need not try to dig deep into history.

After listing authentic Upanishads, lets see which Gita-s are considered as authentic.

Authentic Gitas

Typically there are more than 30 Gita-s. Most of them are a part of PurANa-s or MahAbhArata or RAmAyaNa). Here, only popular gItA-s are listed. The list is not exhaustive. An exhaustive list can be found on sanskrit documents site - other gItA-s

1. Bhagavad GItA

A part of Mahabharata. First upadEsha by Krishna bhagavAn to in beloved disciple Arjuna. Most popular and unique Gita. Commented by many

2. Uttara GItA

Second upadesha of Sri Krishna to Arjuna of Yogic-advaitic nature. Commented by Sri GauDapadAcArya.

Contains three chapters. Talks about Jiva-Brahma Aikya and some info about nAdI-s and how jIva spreds throughout the body.

3. Anu GItA

Part of MahAbhArata. Third upadesha by Sri Krishna to Arjuna.

It forms part of the Asvamedha Parvan of the Mahâbhârata, and is contained in thirty-six chapters of that Parvan. These chapters--being chapters XVI to LI--together with all the subsequent chapters of the Asvamedha Parvan, form by themselves what in some of our copies is called the Anugîtâ Parvan-a title which affords a parallel to the title Bhagavadgîtâ Parvan, which we have already referred to. The Anugîtâ is not now a work of any very great or extensive reputation. But we do find some few quotations from it in the Bhâshyas of Sankarâkârya, and one or two in the Sankhya-sâra of Vigñâna Bhikshu,

Source | Main Page

Note: Adi Shankara has also commented on Sanat SujAtIyA, a part of Mahabharat.

4. Uddhava GItA

Part of BhAgavat PurANa, Canto 11, last message of Sri Krishna to his beloved cousin and disciple Sri Uddhava.

Excellent Gita, covers many issues like Varnashram dharma, Karma, Bhakti, Jnana, Idol worship

5. Shiva Gita / Siva GItA

A Part of Padma Purana, Patala khand / Uttara Khand (depending upon version of Padma Purana). A discourse between Bhagavan Shiva and Bhagavan Rama

Unique Gita, covering many fields, like dvaita, advaita, svarUpa of Jiva, Glories of Bhagavan Shiva, his virATa svarUpa and his impersonal nature, beyond three guNa-s. explanation of panchamahAbhUta-s, equality and respect for viShNu, nirAkAra and sAkAra upAsanA, ways of worshipping Siva, transmigration of jIva, jIva gatI after death and how again jIva enters another body, etc. Contains 16 chapters. In some editions, 16th chapter is divided into 3 (16, 17 and 18). In some versions, even though Shiva Gita ends in 16th chapter, two more chapters are found

Chapter 17: brahmanirUpaNa yOga
Chapter 18: jIvanamukti svarUpa nirupaNa yOga

Commentaries on Shiva Gita:

- Sri Sripad Pandit Aradhya, a great siddha Shivayogi of Vira-shaivism (1060 AD) wrote commentary on Shiva Gita. He considered it a very important Shaivite text and the essence of Virashaivism. Sri Abhinava Nrisimha Bharati has written a wonderful Sanskrit commentary on Shiva Gita. source
- Shiva Gita is referred by Sadashiva Brahmendra of Kanchi Kamakoti Math
- Sri Paramasivendra Saraswati II of Kanchi Kamakoti Math, belonging to 16th Century wrote a commentary on Shiva Gita – source (search for 'Siva Gita')
- Shiva Gita with Bal Nandini Vyakhya: archive.org | Scribd

Complete Shiva Gita (Link given only for educational purpose. Vaishnava-s may not like this blog, however, there is no intention from the author of Understanding Advaita to hurt sentiments)

Shiva Gita in Print version is available at Gita Press, translated by shri Nandlal Dashora, Published by Randhir Prakashan. translation and commentary is in Hindi Language

(Though it is published by Randhir Prakashan, it is available at Gita Press).

Another translation is done by Khemraj in Hindi. It is available at:

91/109, Khemraj Shrikrishnadass Marg,, 7th Khetwadi Back Road Corner,

Mumbai - 400004 (Maharashtra) India

Phone(s) : +91-22-2385 7456

Mobile :

Fax : +91-22- 2385 7456

Another translation in Hindi is available at

Karamsingh Amarsingh Bookstore, Bara Bazar, Haridwar

6. AshTAvakra GItA

An ancient independent text. A discourse between King Janak and AshTAvakra munI. It is based on ajAta vAda. Not recommended for all.

7. Yog VasisTa or VasisTa GItA

Yog VasisTa is considered as an important text for advaitins and is authored by Sage VAlmikI. SrI VidyAraNya svAmI has cited it many times in his pancadaSI.

There are many traditional commentaries by Kashimri and Advaita Saints indicating it's popularity and of being ancient text of high importance. through puranic like stories, but with advaita as the final goal, the messages are given in very clear cut way, even touching ajAta vAda. yOga vaisiTha boldly says this world is brama (illusion), not real (asatya) and that the whole world is pervaded by non-dual atman. It also says that Atman, brahman and paramatman are one and the same.

Various commentaries written in traditional way (in sanskrit) are extant.

vasiSTha-rAmAyaNa-candrikA by advayAraṇya (son of narahari)
tAtparya prakASa by Ananda Bodhendra SarasvatI (seems to be disciple of gangAbodhendra sarasvatI. Not much info is available with me)
bhASya by GangAdharendra
pada candrikA by mAdhava SarasvatI

laghu-yOga-vasistha-samgrah by vidyAraNya svAmI

Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu prohibited reading this text, as it teaches advaita. Advaita prabhu, a disciple used to listen to it's discourses from advaitins and Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu was not happy about his disciple. The incident can be found in Sri Chaitanya Charitramrita, CC Adi 12.40.

Largest version of Yoga VasisTa contains 25000 verses and has equal no of verses as commentary. Shorter version, called LAghu Yoga VasisTa (Laghu means small), contains 5000 verses. Still shorter version contains 1000 verses. there is still a shorter version called as Yoga VAsisTa Sara. Swami Chinmaya has selected about 100 verses in his translation of Yoga VasisTa sAra.

Yoga VAsisTa has adopted a unique method of teachings in the form of beautiful stories full of deep meaning.

This Gita is not recommended for all.

Sri Ramanashram has published Yoga Vasista sara here. Many other version are available on internet.

There are many Gita-s found in PUrANa-s, which are considered as authentic by some but may not have universal acceptance. Some of them are listed below.

8. VasisTa version of Bhagavad GItA or Bhagavad Gita as predicted by Sage VasisTa (Part of Yog VasisTa)

Recently, a commentary by Swami Ved Bharti under the title of 'Song of The Lord (Gita in Yoga-Vasistha)'

Moving away from the traditional Mahabharata narration, Yoga-Vasistha presents a different narrative approach by the Vedic seer, Vasistha – about the Krsna-Arjun dialogue –to his pupil Rama as if it would happen eventually in the remote future.

Some also say that study of Bhagavad gita is incomplete and it has to be studied along with Vasista's version of Bahgavad Gita

9. Ribhu Gita

Part of Shiva-Rahasya Up-PUrANa is highly revered and recommended by Sri Ramana Maharshi. Some do not consider Up-PUrANa-s as Authentic, however Adi Shankara in his Vishnu Sahasranama BhASya has cited 3 up-uparANa-s.

10. Guru Gita

Part of Skanda PurANa. Many verses from it are chanted as daily prayers to Guru. Gained Popularity in today's age.

Extremely useful in developing Guru Bhakti.

Not known to have been cited or commented by any pUrvAcArya-s.

Guru Gita in pdf and html format (available in Hindi and English. Hindi Translation is done by Shri Nandlal Dashora and is published by Randhir Prakashan)

11. Avadhoot Gita and Jivan Mukta Gita

Both Gita-s are independent texts and are believed to be authored by Bhagavan Dattatraya. They are considered very ancient and important. They are of advaitic nature.

Not commented by any pUrvAcArya. Many AcArya-s of present age are translating this Gita including those associated with Gita Press, Gorakhpur

12. RAma GItA

Rama Gita is a part of AdhyAtma RAmAyaNa, which inturn is a part of BrahmAnDa PurANa. It consists of 62 verses. AdhyAtma RAmAyaNa is cited by SrI VidyAraNa svAmI in his PanchdaSI and by SrI SadAnanda in his VedAnta SAra. AdhyAtma RAmAyaNa portrays the story of SrI RAma from spiritual POV.

Though short in length, it is said to be 'Shruti sArA sangrah' meaning essence of all veda-s. It is of advaitic nature.

Many AcArya-s of present age are translating this Gita including those associated with Gita Press, Gorakhpur. Swami Chinmaya has translated and commented Sri Rama Gita.

There are many more less popular Gita-s which are not listed here. Some of them may be important.

13. PAnDava GItA

Part of MahAbhArata (often called as BhArat) - Cited as reference by SrI VidyAraNya svAmI in PanchadaSI 7.176

14. Brahma GItA

Part of SUta SAmhitA of Skanda PurANa. SUta SamhitA is commented by SrI VidyAraNya svAmI in the name of TAtparya dipikA. SUtA SamhitA is considered as very important. In a copy of sUta samhitA kept by Sri Ramana Maharshi, the editor mentions that SrI Adi SankarAcArya ji read sUta samhitA 18 times before writing his famous sUtra bhASya (Brahma Sutra Bhashya)

15. gaNeSa GItA

gaNeSa gItA is a part of gaNeSa purANa. It has many verses similar to bhagavad gItA. Due to this reason some say that this is not an ancient gItA. However **Sri nilakanThAcArya / srikAntAcArya (both are same person), a great SaivAcArya / SivAcArya has written a tikA on SrI gaNeSa gItA.** Hence it is authentic.

This gItA is non-sectarian, as in chapter 1, verse 20, it describes all five devatA-s worshipped in pancayatna pUjA as confirmed by SrI nilakanTha in his tikA on sloka 1.20.

gaNeSa gItA says

Any yoga involving a fixed mind resting on Siva, Visnu, Shakti, Surya and on me (Ganesha), protector of men, is the right yoga in my opinion. 1.20

I alone, having taken various forms, create, protect and destroy the world for my own play. 1.21

I alone am Maha Visnu, I alone am Sadasiva, I alone am the great Shakti, I alone am Aryaman, dear one. 1.22

16. kapila gItA

kapila gItA is a part of bhAgavat purANa 3rd skandha. It contians 3 chapters. 3rd chapter is about the glories of kapila gItA and ends with phala shruti. kapila mentioned in this gItA is different from kapila muni of samkhya says svAmI Tejomayananda in his commentary. It teaches advaita bhakti and is unique in his own way. It also explains that jIva is destroyed and one attains oneness with the supreme state of viShNu, paramapada, which is consciousness, Brahman.

AUTHENTICITY OF PURANAS, UP-PURANAS AND STHALA PURANAS

Updated on 01st May 2020.

Changed Summary, corrected slokas from BP 8.12.8-9 and gave detailed explanation (Thanks to a sAdhaka pointing them)

[beta]

Summary in Brief

Pranams,

Just like other articles on this site, this article too is lengthy. Hence we are giving summary and conclusion in brief.

Points highlighted in this article in simple words are:

Verses in padma purANa, uttara khaNDa classifying purANa-s into sAttvika, rAjasika and tAmasika purANa-s taken up for analysis. These verses are rejected by using many ways.

1. Another classification is quoted from svarga khaNDa of padma purANa, which says that all the purANa-s being manifestation of different parts of Sri Hari's body are very sacred and capable of bestowing salvation.
2. padma purANa's uttara khaNDa is considered to be the most corrupted portion.
3. It is shown that none of the advaita AchArya-s including Adi Sankara bhagavapAda consider any purANa as sAttvika, rAjasika or tAmasika
4. veda-s, upanishads and Mahabharata verses are quoted in support of claim showing Siva as unborn, self-dependent God and is supreme Brahman.
5. Neither mahAbhArata nor veda-s nor gItA divides into three parts sAttvika, rAjasika and tAmasika.
6. All accept that in case of contradiction views of shruti are considered as supreme. shruti, itihAsa and purANa are accepted in descending authority, shruti being topmost. On this basis, verses from padma purANa classifying purANa-s into three categories - sattva, rajasa and tamasa are rejected.
7. Logical reason is given as why bhagavAn veda vyAsa or bhagavAn brahmA jI cannot get influenced by guNa-s and that they would not do any act to lead anyone into hell. Leading dis-believers in hell is more of a concept of Abrahamic faith like Christianity and Islam. Our culture makes conscious effort to logically explain dis-believers to become theists without making to blindly believe in God. We believe that each and every soul is moving towards it's source brahman and will one day merge in it losing it's own identity.
8. Some arguments of vaiShNava-s like trying to prove Siva is born and hence is demi-god and has lower status than viShNu is discussed and their double standard

of calling Siva and brahmA as param-bhAgavata-s and at the same time their worship leads one to hell is questioned.

Brief explanation of slokas from Padma Purana

There are verses in parma purANa, uttara khaNDa that classify purANa-s as sAttvika, rAjasika and tAmasika. The classification is

Sattvik Puranas: Vishnu Purana, Naradiya Purana, Padma Purana, Garuda Purana, Varaha Purana, Srimad Bhagavata Purana (236.18)

Rajasik Puranas: Brahmanda Purana, Brahmavaivarta, Markandeya Purana, Bhavishya Purana, Vamana Purana, Brahma Purana (236.19)

Tamasika Puranas: Matsya Purana, Kurma Purana, Linga Purana, Shiva Purana, Skanda Purana, Agni Purana (236.20)

It further states that

Among these puranas Satvika Puranas lead one to liberation, Rajasa do not cause good and tamasa puranas lead one to hell. (236.21)

However, another classification exists in same padma purANa, svarga khaNDa saying that all purANa-s are a part of ShrI hari

1. Brahma Purana is said to be the 'forehead' of Sri Hari,
2. Padma Purana is said to be the 'heart' of Sri Hari,
3. Vishnu Purana is said to be the 'right arm' of Sri Hari.
4. Shiva Purana is said to be the 'left arm' of Sri Hari.
5. Srimad Bhagawat is said to be his 'thigh',
6. Narada Purana is said to be his 'navel',
7. Markendeya Purana is said to be his 'right-foot'.
8. Agni Purana is said to be his 'left foot',
9. Bhavishya Purana is said to be his 'right-knee',
10. Brahma Vaivrata Purana is said to be his 'left-knee'.
11. Linga Purana is said to be his 'right ankle',
12. Varaha Purana is said to be his 'left ankle',
13. Skanda Purana is said to be the hair on the body of 'Sri Hari'.
14. Vamana Purana is said to be his 'skin'.
15. Kurma Purana is said to be his 'back'.
16. Matsya Purana is said to be his 'stomach'.
17. Garuda Purana is said to be his 'bone-marrow'.
18. Brahmanda Purana is said to be his 'bone'.

Padma Purana, svarga khaNDa (62.2-7)

From the above, we can conclude that all purANa-s are important and capable of leading devotee to moksha.

With this summary in brief, let us begin the article

Controversial Slokas from padma purANa, their refutation, and quoting shAstras glorifying Siva

Few orthodox vaishNava-s and other Hindus adhere to varNa by birth. In order to establish the superiority of viShNu over Siva, the site is they establish viShNu as Supreme Brahman and viShNu is a person with attributes i.e. ChaturbhUja viShNu. Just like there can be only one Prime Minister and all others are under him in seniority, so does the same apply here. All other deva-s other than viShNu are inferior. In other words, there is hirarchy from top being viShNu to the brahmA to Siva up to the bottom i.e. blade of grass. In this context, if we compare this classification with the varNa creation in veda-s and dharma smriti-s, then the higher or top part of body is superior. In this case, both viShNu and Siva purana are considered equal while bhAgavat purANa, which is considered as the best amongst purANa-s by vaishNaVa-s, is an inferior purANa than both.

However, padma purANa itself does not say so. It simply says that all purANa-s are the parts (ansha-s) of ShrI hari. For the working of body all parts are important. Hence no purANa is superior or inferior.

vaishNaVa-s cash on these few verses which allows one to discard the authority of other purANa-s, thereby making it easy to establish viShNu-sarvottama, as sAttvika purANa-s are dedicated to spreading the glories of bhagavAn viShNu.

Here, we will refute this claim by logical analysis

Refutation of controversial verses of padma purANa by use of Logic

It is said that veda vyAsa is himself the incarnation of bhagavAn viShNu. It is he who has split veda-s into four parts, created mahAbhArata and split one purANa into 18 parts. As per the basic rule accepted by all vedantists, the authority of shruti is more than that of itihAsa and authority of itihAsa is more than that of purANa-s. If some verses are found which contradict shruti (veda-s) than those verses are rejected.

By this logic, neither veda-s, nor itihAsa has been internally split into three categories - sAttvika, rAjasika and tAmasika. Nor there is any mention in itihAsa (i.e. mahAbhArata or vAlmiki rAmAyaNa) that such split is been done purposefully done by veda vyAsa in order to mislead people to worship God other than viShNu. To add to this, other classification of purANA-s exists in the same purANa. veda-s themselves do not denigrate the status of Siva or say that those who worship Siva go to hell.

Again, many scholars are of the opinion that the last part of padma purANa is highly interpolated and often accused to be the most corrupted. uttara khaNDa is the last part of most purANa-s. The controversial verses categorizing purANa-s are in this uttara part, while those describing all 18 purANa-s as parts of ShrI hari are in svarga khaNDa.

From the above logic we can reject these controversial verses.

Some have also argued that vyAsa or brahmA jI were deluded or were endowed with tamasa and rajasa guNa while composing these purANa-s. If we accept this logic, it would mean that brahmA jI cannot control his own thoughts and such a person who cannot control this own thoughts and gets influenced by guNa-s is not considered worthy of carrying the responsibility of creating this world. We all know that brahmA jI is the creator of this world, hence by accepting this logic, we are directly questioning shrI hari, which is of course unacceptable.

Similarly, veda vyAsa himself endowing with rajasa and tamasa guNa is not mentioned anywhere in any purANa or mahAbhArata. It is cooked up story of vaiShNava-s. It is unacceptable that the avatAra of bhagavAn hari can be influenced by guNa-s or that he purposefully wrote these purANa with the intention to delude men and women or for those who only want material benefits from God.

In either case, it is not acceptable that either brahmA jI or veda vyAsa jI could be influenced by guNa-s. brahmA, viShNu and mahesha (Siva / rudra) control these guNa-s, but themselves never get influenced by them. Hence they can uplift devotees from these guNa-s.

Such accusation of taking avatAra to mislead people is often targeted at Adi Sankara and Lord Buddha. While Adi Sankara is considered as hidden buddhist, Lord Buddha is considered as an avarAta of bhagavAn viShNu who took birth to mislead ignorant and disbelieving men from the vedic path. Both stories are wrong. Adi Sankara was not a hidden-buddhist is proved in a section, Clearing Accusations and Doubts. Lord Buddha's story is also cooked up story, as this relates to the inner city i.e piNDaNDa, the inner universe, own own body which is divided into sthula Sarira(physical gross body), sukshma Sarira (subtle body) and kAraNa Sarira (causal body). They are collectively called as tripurA and the destroyer of these cities is called as tripurANtaka. Even if we take this story in literal sense, the three planets of gold, silver and iron were definitely not earth and hence the Lord Buddha, of purANa is not the Lord Buddha, the originator of Buddhism. Further explanation of destruction of tripura (3 cities) is beyond the scope of current work.

Generally the name by which any personality becomes famous (or infamous) reflects his / her character and his actions. An example is that of dushAshana. His name was sushAshana. No parent will give demonic name to their children. Similarly duryodhana's (dur-yoddhA or bad warrior i.e. warrior with bad ethics or wicked warrior) birth name was 'suyoddhyA' (su-yoddhA, good warrior). The name 'rAvaNa' was given to 'dashAnanda' by Lord Siva himself because his cry due to unbearable pain caused by crushing of his hands under Mount Kailash echoed in all three loka-s. Due to his crying dashAnanda was called as rAvaNa. Similarly, 'buddha' or 'bodha' means the 'awakened one' or 'the one who has realised his true Self'.

The claim that Siva can only grant material wishes is also a cooked up story and only those who do not want moksha and are satisfied with the fulfilment of material objects worship Siva. Infact Siva is often shown as an ascetic, while viShNu is always shown as wearing golden jewellery and wearing a crown. Siva does not wear crown. Nowhere you will find either only veda-s or in mahAbhArata or purANa that Siva is incapable of granting moksha. On one hand vaiShNava-s consider Siva and brahmA jI as param-bhAgavata (greatest devotee of viShNu) and on the other hand they leave on opportunity to denigrate the

status of bhagavAn Siva. In this process they desparetely try to prove the Siva or rudra was born hence cannot be Ishvara. In this process of denigrating status of Siva, they break the basic tenets of Vaishnavism - jIva, jagat and Ishvara are eternal. If we consider Siva worship as 'leading to hell', then it contradicts their claim of Siva being param-bhAgavata. If parama-bhAgavata Siva can lead one to hell, then what about other devotee of bhagavAn viShNu? Does bhagavAn viShNu teach his senior devotees to lead laymen to hell? The logic is flawed, smelling double standards and is unacceptable.

Considering the fact that earlier there the same padma purANa says that earlier there was only one purANa, which was later split into 18 parts for the benefits of all. Hence it would be illogical to accept that the original purANa created for leymen has sections that mislead them.

Again, these so-called sAttvika purANa-s have sung the glories of Siva. mahAbhArata also sings the glory of bhagavAn Siva. Before starting of mahAbhArata war, bhagavAn krShNa himself asked arjuna to perform durgA pUjA. bhagavAn krShNa has himself considered Siva as bhagavAn and delivered Siva saharanAma in mahAbhArata which is considered authentic by even dvaitins. krShNa also underwent pAsupata diksha, smeared ashes and chanted the holy name of bhagavAn Siva. In vAlmiki rAmAyaNa, riShi agastya asked bhagavAn rAma to worship sUrya deva and taught him Aditya hridayam.

Verses from sAttvika purANa-s, mahAbhArata and veda-s glorifing Siva

Some verses from padma purANa glorifying Siva are

In padma pURANa itself, we find the greatness of Siva and statements of non-difference between them (Siva-viShNu-abheda)

For e.g. in svarga khaNDa, chapter 33 speaks of important places of pilgrimage and the rewards (phala-shrutI) of visiting them. Holy places like vArANasI and kASI are given. While explaining the importance of vArANasI, it is said that where both viShNu and mahAdeva reside, bhakta-s get mukti if they leave their physical body on this holy place.

While explaining importance of kASI, srI nArada ji says (33.57-59), among deva-s, nArAyaNa is the best (shreShTha) and amongst ISvara-s, girISha (Siva / rudra) is the best (ShreShTha). The one who worships rudra, do not get rebirth.

In padma purANa, there is Siva gItA which sings glories of Lord Siva and Lord Siva shows his vishvarUpa in chapter 7.

We find Siva being glorified in bhAgavat purANa too.

BP 8.7.22: ***O lord, you are the cause of bondage and liberation of the entire universe because you are its ruler. Those who are advanced in spiritual***

consciousness surrender unto you, *and therefore you are the cause of mitigating their distresses, and* ***you are also the cause of their liberation.*** *We therefore worship Your Lordship.*

BP 8.7.23: ***O lord, you are self-effulgent and supreme. You create this material world by your personal energy, and you assume the names Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśvara when you act in creation, maintenance and annihilation.***

BP 8.7.24: ***You are the cause of all causes, the self-effulgent, inconceivable, impersonal Brahman, which is originally Parabrahman.*** *You manifest various potencies in this cosmic manifestation.*

More examples are given later.

Verses from mahAbhArata establishing it's authority over purANa-s

Mahabharata, Book One, Adi Parva, Chapter 2 (Section II), verses 238-240 says,

"O ye Brahman, ***as the four kinds of creatures (viviparous, oviparous, born of hot moisture and vegetables) are dependent on space for their existence, so the Puranas depend upon this history.*** *As all the senses depend for their exercise upon the various modifications of the mind, so do all acts (ceremonials) and moral qualities depend upon this treatise.* ***There is not a story current in the world but doth depend on this history, even as body upon the food it taketh".***

Source: http://www.sacred-texts.com/hin/m01/m01003.htm

Mahabharata, Book 1, Adi Parva, Section II

Verses in mahAbhArata proving supremacy of Siva / rudra

It is said in Mahabharata 13.14.183-184 that

Thou art he that hadst created from thy right side the Grandsire Brahma, the Creator of all things. Thou art he that hadst created from thy left side Vishnu for protecting the Creation. Thou art that puissant Lord who didst create Rudra when the end of the Yuga came and when the Creation was once more to be dissolved. *That Rudra, who sprang from thee destroyed the Creation with all its mobile and immobile beings, assuming the form of Kala of great energy,...*

(condt)

"The blessed Vishnu said, 'I saluted Mahadeva, saying,--Salutations to thee, O thou that art the eternal origin of all things. The Rishis say that thou art the Lord of the Vedas. The

righteous say that thou art Penance, thou art Sattwa, thou art Rajas, thou art Tamas, and thou art Truth. Thou art Brahman, thou art Rudra ...

Further to strengthen our claim, we are prood from both Sankara bhAshya-s of gItA, upanishads and viShNu saharanAma to prove that Adi Sankara preached smArta dharma.

We also have various shruti-pramANa-s to prove that gaNesha-Siva-shakti-viShNu-sUrya abheda. We can also prove brahmA-viShNu-Siva abheda from Sankara bhAshya-s. Some proofs are given in the later part of this articles while Sankara bhAshya-s are quoted in another section Adi Sankara preached smArta dharma.

All five deities have their own atharvashirSha-s, each is the supreme brahman in it's formless aspect. skambha sukta, mahAkAla sukta claim Siva to be superior. Hence both Siva and viShNu as tatvam are supreme. It is further explained in another article viShNu and caturbhuja viShNu.

In the longer response, we have quoted few verses from mahAbhArta, padma purANa and from veda-s proving the superiority of Siva.

Here we will quote some verse from veda-s proving superiority od rudra

*RV 1.43.6 Grant us, **Immortal One,** the food which mortals eat: be gracious unto me, my seed, my progeny.*

*AV 4.28.3: Reverence we offer, O Bhava, to thy roaring, to thy breath, and to thy injurious qualities; reverence to thee, **O Rudra, thousand-eyed, immortal!***

*RV 7.59.12 **We Worship Tryambaka (shiva)**, Who spreads Fragrance and Increases nourishment, **May He LIBERATE (moksha) us, like the cucumber from its stem, from Mortal life, and give us Immortality.***

*Then the discipline students (Brahmacharins of Yajnavalkya) asked him: Pray, tell us, **what is that mantra by reciting which one attains immortality ? He replied: By (reciting) Satarudriya.** These mantras are indeed the names of (Rudra to achieve) immortality. **By (reciting) these (mantras) one becomes immortal.** - Jabala Upanishad III-1*

Finally, we consider the opinion of advaita and other purvAchArya-s. None of advaita AchArya-s have quoted these verses. Adi Sankara in his viShNu saharanAma bhAshya has quoted as many as 12 purANa-s including upa-purANa-s. Similar trend is observed by other advaitins. vidyAraNya svAmI in his panchadaSI chapter 7 has accepted all five forms of Gods as equal manifestations of supreme brahman. madhusudan sarasvatI has written commentary on Siva mahimna stotra in two parts, one praising Siva, another praising krShna. He says that the sole aim of composing commentary is to prove the non-difference between them. This analysis can be found here. vAchaspati mishrA and amalAnanda in

therir commentaries on brahma sutra-s have invoked blessings of gaNesha. They considered gaNesha has the supreme brahman.

Other pUrvAchArya-s and great saints like GYAneshvara, tukArAma, muktAbai, nivrittinAtha, namdeo, mirAbAI, gosvAmI tulsidAsa, lAla deDa (llaleshvarI), mahAkavi kAlidAsa, abhinavgupta, SrikAntAchArya, ShrIpad Srivallabha, bhAskararAya makin, etc has never denigrated the status of either Siva or viShNu.

Lastly **we can interpret satva, rajasa and tamasa in different way**.

It is a general notion that sattva guNa is the best guNa, the divine guNa, rajasa denotes materialistic qualities and activities and tamasa guNa denotes inertia, laziness, negative demonic qualities like revengeful attitude. However these guNa-s have alternate meaning also.

rajasa can mean 'mental activity' which can mean 'mental agitation'. Mental agitation is the disturbance created by thoughts during meditation. This is the first guNa to be controlled.

sattva can also mean 'to preserve' (as bhagavAn viShNu preserves). sattva guNa also has quality of 'renunciation'. Hence by renunciation of that which is not 'I' one can reach the supreme state - Brahman.

tamasa also means ignorance 'avidyA' and 'aGYAna', the root cause of misery and mortality. It is a veil which separates us or keeps us away from our true nature. It is necessary to remove the veil of ignorance so as to know our true nature.

Finally one has to transcend these verses and abide in Self.

Conclusion:

We can conclude the during the time of mahAbhArta viShNu was not the only worshipped deity. Siva, shakti and sUrya were equally worshipped. We all know the gaNesha is invoked before beginning of any event or task to remove obstacles. We have gaNesha sukta and gaNesha atharvaShirsha which say gaNesha is the supreme brahman. Hence in ancient days, smArta dharma was prevalent. viShNu was not the exclusively worshipped deity.

Words sattva, rajasa and tamasa can be interpreted in different way. Finally one has to transcend above these guNa-s and abide in Self, which is none other than the supreme brahman. Contemplating on any form of Ishvara helps us transcend these guNa-s

From the above short analysis, we can conclude that there is Siva-viShNu abheda. Hence both can grant moksha. Reading the so-called tAmasika purANa-s will not lead one to hell as padma purANa says. In other words, these verses are interpolation.

Lets begin our longer reply.

Controversial verses in padma purANa

Vaishnava-s claim that not all purANa-s are acceptable and of equal authenticity. They cite a verse from padma purAnA in which it is said that tAmasIka puraNa-s are the ones which leads one to hell.

Lets have a look at these verses.

There are some verses in Padma Purana, Uttara-khanda, 236.18–21 which categorize each of 18 major purANa-s into sAttvika, rAjasika and tamasika. Lets analyse them.

Satvika Puranas:

वैष्णवं नारदीयं च तथा भागवतं शुभम् ।
गारुडं च तथा पाद्मं वाराहं शुभदर्शने ।
सात्विकानि पुराणानि विज्ञेयानि शुभानि वै ।।

Vishnu Purana, Naradiya Puran, Padma Purana, Garuda Purana, Varaha Purana, Srimad Bhagavata Purana are sAttvika (236.18)

Rajasa Puranas:

ब्रह्माण्डं ब्रह्मवैवर्तं मार्कण्डेयं तथैव च ।
भविष्यं वामनं ब्राह्मं राजसानि निबोधत ।।

Brahmanda Purana, Brahmavaivarta, Markandeya Purana, Bhavishya Purana, Vamana Purana, Brahma Purana are rAjasika (236.19)

Tamasa Puranas :

मात्सयं कौर्मं तथा लैङ्गम् शैवं स्कान्दं तथैव च ।
आग्नेयं च षडेतानि तामसानि निबोधत ।।

Matsya Purana, Kurma Purana, Linga Purana, Shiva Purana, Skanda Purana, Agni Purana are tAmasika (236.20)

सात्विका मोक्षदाः प्रोक्ताः राजसा सर्वदा अशुभाः ।
तथैव तामसा देवि निरयप्राप्तिहेतवः ।।

प.पु. उत्तर 236.21

Among these puranas Satvika Puranas lead one to liberation, Rajasa do not cause good and tamasa puranas lead one to hell. (236.21)

The word niraya (निरय) is translated as 'Hell'. While this is one meaning of the word, there are other meanings like profitless, yielding no income, bring or get out.

So the verse could mean,

O Devi pArvatI, by reading tAmasika purANa-s, one will not gain anything.

We will try to give some logical reasoning why we disagree with those verses. There is another classification in matsya purANa.

Matsya Purana 190.13-14 says,

"The glory of Hari is greater in sattvika scripture; the glory of Brahma is greater in rajasika scriptures; and that of Agni and Siva greater in tamasika scriptures. In mixed scriptures the glory of Sarasvati and the pitrs is said to be greater."

[needs to be clarified]

Note: I am not able to find this classification in todays version of matya purana. Quoted slokas are picked up from internet.

Another Classification in padma purANa - a better one

According to Maharshi Suta, all the Puranas are nothing but the mediums through which Sri Hari manifests himself

एकं पुराण रुप वै तत्र पाद्मं परं महत् । ब्रह्मं मूर्धा हरेरेव ह्रदयं पद्मसंज्ञकम्॥
वैष्णवं दक्षिणो बाहुः शैव वामो महेशितुः । उरु भागवतं प्रोक्तं नाभिः स्यान्नारदीयकम्॥
मार्कण्डेयं च दक्षांघ्रिर्वामो ह्याग्रेयमुच्यते । भविष्यं दक्षिणो जानुर्विष्णोरेव महात्मनः ॥
ब्रह्मवैवर्तसंज्ञं तु वामज्जानुस्नदाहृतः । लैऽगैं तु गुल्फकं दर्क्ष वाराहं वामगुल्फकम् ॥
स्कान्दं पुराण लोमानित्वगस्य वामनं स्मृतम् । कौर्म पृष्ठं समाख्यातं मात्स्यं मेदः प्रकी्र्तितम् ॥
मज्जा तु गारुडं प्रोक्तं ब्रह्माण्डमस्थि गीयते । एवमेवाभवद्विष्णुः पुराणाव्यवो हरिः ॥

पद्म पुराण, स्वर्ग खण्ड (६२।२-७)

1. Brahma Purana is said to be the 'forehead' of Sri Hari,
2. Padma Purana is said to be the 'heart' of Sri Hari,
3. Vishnu Purana is said to be the 'right arm' of Sri Hari.
4. Shiva Purana is said to be the 'left arm' of Sri Hari.
5. Srimad Bhagawat is said to be his 'thigh',
6. Narada Purana is said to be his 'navel',
7. Markendeya Purana is said to be his 'right-foot'.
8. Agni Purana is said to be his 'left foot',
9. Bhavishya Purana is said to be his 'right-knee',
10. Brahma Vaivrata Purana is said to be his 'left-knee'.
11. Linga Purana is said to be his 'right ankle',
12. Varaha Purana is said to be his 'left ankle',
13. Skanda Purana is said to be the hair on the body of 'Sri Hari'.
14. Vamana Purana is said to be his 'skin'.
15. Kurma Purana is said to be his 'back'.
16. Matsya Purana is said to be his 'stomach'.
17. Garuda Purana is said to be his 'bone-marrow'.
18. Brahmanda Purana is said to be his 'bone'.

Padma Purana, svarga khaNDa (62.2-7)

Note: These verses are found on both version of padma purana - south Indian with 5 khanda-s and bengali with 7 khanda-s.

We can conclude that, all the Puranas being manifestation of different parts of Sri Hari's body are very sacred and capable of bestowing salvation.

For a body to function properly, all parts are important.

Source: Padma Puarana, Swarga Khand, International Gita Society / sankshipta Padma Purana

According to Padma Purana, there was just one purana, which was split into 18 by Bhagavan Veda Vyasa.

Since opinion of pUrvAcArya-s is invaluable, lets analyze how advaita pUrvAcArya-s view purANA-s and that they accept this verses as authentic or not.

Opinion of pUrvAcArya-s and Siva-viShNu abheda

In References cited by Adi Sankara in his viSHNu sahasranAma bhASya, we have seen that **revered AcArya** cites references of 12 purANa-s. These include sattvik, rAjasika and tAmasika as well as up-purANa-s. He also cites non-difference between Siva (rudra) - viShNu while translating the attributes (names) 23-keSava, 27-Siva, 114-rudra (here Adi Sankara cites linga purANa). viShNu sahasranAma contains many names common to Siva and vice versa.

From prasthAntrayi bhASya and some prakaraNa grantha-s, it can be concluded that **Adi Sankara's** IsTa deva was bhagavAna viShNu. His parents were Siva bhakta-s. Adi Sankara never denigrated status of any deva, which are revered as bhagavAna. AcArya directly connects Siva with Brahman, as kalyANakArI AtmA. AcArya also connects viShNu with brahman. Both forms of ISvara are not different from tatva POV.

Adi Sankara has written a gloss on Patanjali yOga sutra, (or as some say has written a gloss on mahAbhASya of vyAsa) by the name yOga tArAvalI where our AcArya has revered both sadASiva and viShNu. AcArya, in verse 2, has called sadASiva as teacher who teaches over 1 lakh ways to absorptive samadhi. Out of which contemplation on nAda is regarded as most worthy. Later on AcArya explains different states of consciousness in which AcArya equates viShNu. Here AcArya explains it as state of viShNu (viShNu pada), as the intervening space where kundalini after abandoning iDa and pingalA concentrates in suSumnA nADI and dissolves in it (refer verse 12). In earlier verses AcArya explains that this happens when one meditates in anAhata nAda (OM). viShNu here would mean as all-pervasive space.

Adi Sankara has not quoted bhAgavat purANa in his prasthAntraya bhASya. In his viShNu sahasranAma bhASya, he has not cited any sloka from bhAgavat purANa.

maharShi vyAsa has written bhASya on patanjalI yOga sUtra-s. maharShi vyAsa begins his commentary by offering salutations to nIlakanTha (the blue throat Lord i.e. Lord Siva).

sant GYAnadEva - (1275 - 1296) (GYAnESvara / Jnaneshwar) was a viShNu bhakta, but never denigrated status of Siva. santa GYAnESvara's elder brother nivrittinAtha was the head of nava-nAtha sampradAya. It is said that after association with his elder brother, GYAnadEva composed amritAnubhava and has revered his elder brother as both guru and

ISvara. It is of the nature of advaita and ajAta vAda, GYAndEva begins the work by offering salutations to Siva and Sakti. (Wherever yOga is mentioned reference is generally made to Siva.)

vidyAraNya svAmI (1300 - 1400 approx) in his panchdaSI 6-111-206, lists many gods like hiraNyagarbha, gaNeSa, Siva, viShNu, devI, sUrya, etc and says that they are all equal. vidyAraNaya svAmI has written a very popular commentary (dipikA) on sUta samhitA, an important part of skanda purANa, by the same 'tAtparya dipikA'. sUta samhitA is considered as very important and is favourite amongst sanyAsin-s and advaitin-s. skanda purAnA is listed as tAmasika. It is not possible that vidyAraNya svAmi was not aware of these verses.

Suta SamhitA is highly revered by Advaitins. Suta Samhita is very liberal in teachings. One instance can be found here. It says,

"The wise say that each of these sastras is intended for a particular class according to the individual qualification, not all for one." *(Skanda-Purana, Suta-Samhita, Yajna-Vaibhava-Khanda, 22nd adhyaya).*

In panchdaSI 8.59, vidyAraNaya svAmI says that the Siva mentioned in Siva purANa is non other than non-dual-self-effulgent kUTastha (Supreme Brahman). svAmI ji says so because whatever laxaNa-s are mentioned for Siva, are the same for Brahman too says translator and commentator svamI SankarAnanda of Chinmaya Mission. Kaivalya 6, mANDUkya 12 and other upanshads have used the word 'Siva' for kUTastha. In Siva purANa, everything is described in dramatic form says svAmI SankarAnanda of Chinmaya Mission..

madhUsudana sarasvatI (1540 - 1640) commented on Siva mahimna stotra in two ways, one glorifying Siva and other krishna. In this way he established non-difference between them.

appayya dixita (1520 - 1593) (dikshita), a Saiva-advaitn, was a Siva bhakta, but he has written some works in praise of viShNu too. He relied heavily on purANa-s while engaging in debates.

bhAskarArAya, (1690 - 1785) a Sakta-advaitin, has commented on srI gaNeSa sahasranAma version found in chapter 42 of GaNeSa purANa, an up-purANa. It is said that bhAskarArAya popularized devI bhAgavata purANa. He has written a commentary on lalItA sahasranAma. (Note ranga rAmanuja muni, upanishad bhASyakAra of srI vaiSnava sampradAya, also lived at same time)

srI abhnavaguptA,, (9th - 10th Century AD) a great multi talented scholar, and master of Kashmir Shaivism was a great Siva bhakta. He wrote commentary on bhagavad gItA. this unique AcArya also wrote additional verse after each chapter, which is a summary of the the whole chapter.

srI nilkantha / srIkAnthAcArya has written commentary on devi bhAgavat. Devi bhAgavata is mentioned in mansa khanda of skanda purAnA, which describes devI bhAgavata as mahA purANa. srI nilkanTha is said to give proper status of viShNu without compromising supremacy of Siva in his brahma sutra bhASya.

The above listed pUrvAcArya-s are considered as an authority on spiritual matters. Hence it is not possible that they must not have spotted these verses. In other words these verses were interpolations.

It should be noted that the classification in only 18 major purANa-s are listed and not up-purANa-s. Hence one cannot say that up-purANa-s are sattvika, rAjasika or tAmasika. To add to it, some purANa-s like harivamsa and devI bhAgavata are attributed to veda vyAsa.

SrIdharAcArya (SrIdhara svAmI)

mAdhvA also selectively quotes various purANa-s including brahmANDa, skanda purANa-s many times in his gita, mahAbhArata and upanishad bhASya-s. Infact mAdhvA in his gitA bhASya intro writes

In some places Sama Veda is called supreme not because of its attribute, but because of the divinity presiding over it. For Rigveda, the presiding deities are Sri, Bharati (Saraswati) and Uma while for Sama, it is Praana and Shiva.

Source: Bhagavad Gita with mahAbharat tAtparya nirNaya translated by Sri Nagesh Sonde, page 170

rAmAnuja has quoted only viShNu purANa in his srI bhASya and no other purANa-s.

Both Adi Sankara and rAmAnuja didn't quote or cite verses from bhAgavat purANa in brahma sUtra bhASya. If sAttvika purANa-s were most authentic, then both of them would have surely quoted bhAgavat purANa, which is considered as complete in itself, capable of giving mukti.

If we remember, bhagavAna in gita 10.22 says that among veda-s I am sAmaveda. Thus bhagavAn does not exhibit difference between the two. Of Course mAdhvA has also explained that Saiva purANa-s are tAmasika and he eulogized Vaishnava purANa-s. Though philosophically, all AcArya-s interpret any verse in support of their siddhanta and cites philosophical difference, disagreements and raise objections, deity denigration cannot be the motive of such great saints. I would personally not believe it and think that

mAdhvA-s original works must have been altered by later mAdhvA-s to suits their needs. mAdhvA put great stress on good conduct (sadAcAra).

mAdhvA was called as 'pUrNa praGYA' meaning the one who has full knowledge. If tAmasika purANa-s are misleading, then why would an AcArya of mAdhvA's stature, who was himself a master of many philosophical systems would have to quote from tAmasikA purANa-s. Even if he has cited verse in favour of viShNu, it does not make any sense to quote such purANa-s, as much literature is available to quote supremacy of viShNu.

Quoting brahmAnDa purANa in his gitA bhASya and upanishad bhASya like ISA upanishad, it means that he is fully aware of AdhyAtma rAmAyaNa, and so srI rAma gItA, which is of advaitic nature. in AdhyAtma rAmAyaNa, srI rAma establishes Siva linga which is known as rAmeSvara linga. As the name suggests, Siva linga is in the form of 'lord of rAma'. This is found in AdhyAtma rAmAyaNa, yuddha khanDa, chapter 4, verse 1.

Saints do not denigrate status of other deities

There were **63 nAyanAra saints**, who never denigrated status of viShNu or any other deity.

lAla deDa - 1300 AD (lalleSvarI, lallA yOgeSvarI), mirA bAI, tukArAma, eknAth, gyAneSvara, narasihm mehta, bhole bAbA, akhO are some saints who never denigrated status of any deity. They were immersed in devotion of their chosen deity (ISTa devatA).

srimatI rAdhAraNI never denigrated status of Siva

pANini, a Saiva and a great sanskrit grammarian and a Siva bhakta, didn't denigrate status of viShNu. aSTAdhyAyI that is considered as an absolute authority on sanskrit grammar. vaiSNava-s use his grammar to prove superiority of viShNu. maharShi patanjalI wrote an excellent commentary, which is called as mahAbhASya. It is only maharShi paranjalI's work commentary that is given the elite status of mahAbhASya (great commentary). Even vaiSnava-s take help of his grammar to prove superiority of viShNu and some use it to denigrate status of Siva and other deities.

maharShi patanjalI in his yOga sUtra-s says devotion to ISvara is important, does dose not specify any form of ISvara. This shows universal attitude.

kAlidAsa (5th century AD) ,a Saiva poet saint, wrote work in praise of Siva and rAma. He wrote kumArasambhava and raghuvamSa, kumArasambhavawhich describes story of pArvatI, her marriage with Siva and kumAra's (kArtikeya's / skanda's) birth. raghuvamSa describes about kings of raghu vamSA (solar dynasty, of bhagavAna rAma's lineage)

srIpad srIvallabha (1320 AD to 1350 AD), considered an avatAra of bhagavAn dattatraya, head of **dattAtraya sampradAya**, who accepts both saguNa and nirguNa form of brahman never denigrated any form of God. Other great saints also considered as avatAra of bhagavana dattatraya like **srI narasimha sarasvatI, srI swamI samartha and sAI bAbA of SirdI** didn't denigrate status of any form of God.

gosvAmI tulsidAsa (1497 AD to 1623 AD), a great devotee of bhagavAn rAma and hanumAna jI has composed SrI rAmacaritmAnas, which is accepted by all. tulsidAsa jI has equated Siva with rAma and has advocated non-difference between them. For rAmanandI-s, study of tulsidAsacrit SrI rAmacaritmAnas is complusory.

Other great yOgI-s of **navanAtha sampradAya** like **kaniphanAtha (Kanifnath), matsyendranAth, gorakhanAth** never denigrated status of viShNu, though they were Siva bhakta-s.

Finally, we have never seen **kruShNa, rAma or Siva** denigrating status of each other.

Thus, we can conclude that at least advaitins do not consider these verse as authentic

Greatness of Siva in padma purANa

In padma pUrANa itself, we find the greatness of Siva and statements of non-difference between them (Siva-ViShNu-abheda)

For e.g. in svarga khaNDa, chapter 33 speaks of important places of pilgrimage and the rewards (phala-shrutI) of visiting them. Holy places like vArANasI and kASI are given. While explaining the importance of vArANasI, it is said that where both viShNu and mahAdeva reside, bhakta-s get mukti if they leave their physical body on this holy place.

While explaining importance of kASI, srI nArada ji says (33.57-59), among deva-s, nArAyaNa is the best (shreShTha) and amongst ISvara-s, girISha (Siva / rudra) is the best (ShreShTha). The one who worships rudra, do not get rebirth. They say, in this param kshetra (most holy place), one attains SivAlaya. Siva+laya meaning resting place of Siva. Siva is none other than kalyANakArI AtmA .e. Brahman of the upanishads. So here, Lord Siva, in the form of rudra gives us liberation at the time of death and one rests in Brahman.

In chapter 35, there is a story of a pious brAhmaNa SankukarNa who used to daily worship kapardISvara (Since bhagavAn Siva is having jaTA-jUTa (matted locks), he is known as kapardI. Once a piSAca came in front of him. SankukarNa when requested him to give info, he said that in prior birth he was a wealthy brAhmaNa and that he never did any

pious work, nor did he worshipped Siva and so he is suffering from starving unquench hunger. SankukarNa atonce asked him to take a bath in holy place and piSAca was at once liberated. Seeing this, all sages and brAhmaNa-s present there sung in praise of bhagavAn Siva.

In chapter 35, Verses 34-43 are stuti-s sung by SankukarNa. Later on the stuti-s continue. The stuti-s describe bhagavAn Siva as advitiya (one and only one), purANa (ancient), brahman, lord of all, creator of this world and that everything resides in him. Siva has linga and as as a-linga svarUpa (form and formless). Siva is beyond the reach of veda-s, beyond darkness, without any root cause (meaning not born of some cause like merits-demerits of past lives), svayam prakASa jyoti-svarUpa (self effulgent), worshipped by yOgI-s, consciousness, better than bhagavAn brahmA ji, he is parameSvara. Some saints leaving savikalp samAdhi embarrassed nirvikalp samAdhi.

Siva gItA is padma purANa describes Siva as supreme, who gives birth to brahmA, viShNu, rudra and all other deva-s and the worlds. Siva shows himself as the supreme Godhead by showing many brahmANDa-s (universes).

Moral of the story is more important than the story itself. I am not aware of any story in any purana, be it tamasic purana, in which finally adharma wins over dharma.

chAndogya upanishad 7.1.2 says *itihAsa, purANa pancama veda* meaning, itihAsa (mahAbhArata and purANa-s are fifth veda. Since it only mentions purANa as one entity and not multiple, Kanchi ParamAcArya concludes that purANa-s must have existed in some form like 4 vedA-s were only one and later on split purAnA-s into 18.

Since purANa-s are eulogized as veda-s, it means that they cannot contradict shruti, infact they should be interpreted in a way that they do not contradict shruti. Also the whole of shruti-s are authoritative. In the same way purANa-s and mahAbhArata is also considered as authoritative. Hence when one purANa was split into 18 or more, then it cannot contain anything that is misleading. In the same way, the whole of mahAbhArata, which is considered as superior in terms of authority than purANa-s, as whatever is there is mahAbhArata is there is purANa-s and whatever is not there is mahAbhArata is not found anywhere else. The question that mahAbhArata had only 25000 verses and later verses were added over millennia and that it is not authored by Veda Vyas is completely wrong, as Adi Sankara in his viShNu sahasranAma bhASya says that

bhArata (mahAbhArata) was compiled by veda vyAsa

mahAbhArata consists of 1 Lakh verses

Adi Sankara says that, upanishads say all three guNa-s are doSa-s and are to be transcended. Hence even sattva guNa is to be transcended.

If we read a verse from Bhagavat Purana (1.1.2), which says that only bhagavat is enough, then it means there is no meaning of reading any shruti or smriti. Why would acharya-s write commentaries on prasthantraiyi. The words are not to be taken literally. It is just glorification or a praise of Bhagavat Purana.

SB 1.1.2: Completely rejecting all religious activities which are materially motivated, this Bhāgavata Purāṇa propounds the highest truth, which is understandable by those devotees who are fully pure in heart. The highest truth is reality distinguished from illusion for the welfare of all. Such truth uproots the threefold miseries. ***This beautiful Bhāgavatam, compiled by the great sage Vyāsadeva [in his maturity], is sufficient in itself for God realization. What is the need of any other scripture?*** *As soon as one attentively and submissively hears the message of Bhāgavatam, by this culture of knowledge the Supreme Lord is established within his heart.*

Considering above points and claims about padma purana being corrupted or interpolated or extrapolated, if at all something needs to be discarded on basis of dubious authority, then it has to be few verses of classification, which are the basis of rejecting parts of shruti-s, smriti-s, veda-s, purANa-s or even the whole Tamasic purANa-s.

Greatness of Siva in bhAgavat purANa

(Verses glorifying bhagavAn Siva can also be found here)

Note: *For convenience I am quoting SB from vedabase, a site dedicated to spreading teachings of Srila Prabhupada. Hence I cannot put 100 % faith in the authenticity of translation. User discretion is advised. If you are a not a Vaishnava, specially if you are not a Gaudiya Vaishnav, at times you will have to ignore Srila Prabhupada's purports.*

Taking refuge in Lord Shiva, the saviour

SB 8.7.19: O King, when that uncontrollable poison was forcefully spreading up and down in all directions, all the demigods, along with the Lord Himself, approached Lord Śiva [Sadāśiva]. Feeling unsheltered and very much afraid, they sought shelter of him.

SB 8.7.20: The demigods observed Lord Śiva sitting on the summit of Kailāsa Hill with his wife, Bhavānī, for the auspicious development of the three worlds. He was being worshiped by great saintly persons desiring liberation. The demigods offered him their obeisances and prayers with great respect.

SB 8.7.21: The prajāpatis said: O greatest of all demigods, Mahādeva, Supersoul of all living entities and cause of their happiness and prosperity, we have come to the shelter of your lotus feet. Now please save us from this fiery poison, which is spreading all over the three worlds.

Shiva, the creator

SB 8.7.22: O lord, you are the cause of bondage and liberation of the entire universe because you are its ruler. Those who are advanced in spiritual consciousness surrender unto you, and therefore you are the cause of mitigating their distresses, and you are also the cause of their liberation. We therefore worship Your Lordship.

SB 8.7.23: O lord, you are self-effulgent and supreme. You create this material world by your personal energy, and you assume the names Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśvara when you act in creation, maintenance and annihilation.

SB 8.7.24: You are the cause of all causes, the self-effulgent, inconceivable, impersonal Brahman, which is originally Parabrahman. You manifest various potencies in this cosmic manifestation.

Shiva as source of OM

SB 8.7.25: O lord, you are the original source of Vedic literature. You are the original cause of material creation, the life force, the senses, the five elements, the three modes and the mahat-tattva. You are eternal time, determination and the two religious systems called truth [satya] and truthfulness [ṛta]. You are the shelter of the syllable oṁ, which consists of three letters a-u-m.

Universe is inside Shiva

SB 8.7.26: O father of all planets, learned scholars know that fire is your mouth, the surface of the globe is your lotus feet, eternal time is your movement, all the directions are your ears, and Varuṇa, master of the waters, is your tongue.

Shiva Stuti

SB 8.7.27: O lord, the sky is your navel, the air is your breathing, the sun is your eyes, and the water is your semen. You are the shelter of all kinds of living entities, high and low. The god of the moon is your mind, and the upper planetary system is your head.

SB 8.7.28: O lord, you are the three Vedas personified. The seven seas are your abdomen, and the mountains are your bones. All drugs, creepers and vegetables are the hairs on your body, the Vedic mantras like Gāyatrī are the seven layers of your body, and the Vedic religious system is the core of your heart.

SB 8.7.29: O lord, the five important Vedic mantras are represented by your five faces, from which the thirty-eight most celebrated Vedic mantras have been generated. Your Lordship, being celebrated as Lord Śiva, is self-illuminated. You are directly situated as the supreme truth, known as Paramātmā.

SB 8.7.30: O lord, your shadow is seen in irreligion, which brings about varieties of irreligious creations. The three modes of nature — goodness, passion and ignorance — are your three eyes. All the Vedic literatures, which are full of verses, are emanations from you because their compilers wrote the various scriptures after receiving your glance.

Shiva, the Brahman

SB 8.7.31: O Lord Girīśa, since the impersonal Brahman effulgence is transcendental to the material modes of goodness, passion and ignorance, the various directors of this material world certainly cannot appreciate it or even know where it is. It is not understandable even to Lord Brahmā, Lord Viṣṇu or the King of heaven, Mahendra.

Shiva, The destroyer

SB 8.7.32: When annihilation is performed by the flames and sparks emanating from your eyes, the entire creation is burned to ashes. Nonetheless, you do not know how this happens. What then is to be said of your destroying the Dakṣa-yagya, Tripurāsura and the kālakūṭa poison? Such activities cannot be subject matters for prayers offered to you.

Shiva Stuti

SB 8.7.33: Exalted, self-satisfied persons who preach to the entire world think of your lotus feet constantly within their hearts. However, when persons who do not know your austerity see you moving with Umā, they misunderstand you to be lusty, or when they see you wandering in the crematorium they mistakenly think that you are ferocious and envious. Certainly they are shameless. They cannot understand your activities.

SB 8.7.34: Even personalities like Lord Brahmā and other demigods cannot understand your position, for you are beyond the moving and non-moving creation. Since no one can understand you in truth, how can one offer you prayers? It is impossible. As far as we are

concerned, we are creatures of Lord Brahmā's creation. Under the circumstances, therefore, we cannot offer you adequate prayers, but as far as our ability allows, we have expressed our feelings.

SB 8.7.35: O greatest of all rulers, your actual identity is impossible for us to understand. As far as we can see, your presence brings flourishing happiness to everyone. Beyond this, no one can appreciate your activities. We can see this much, and nothing more.

SB 8.7.36: Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued: Lord Śiva is always benevolent toward all living entities. When he saw that the living entities were very much disturbed by the poison, which was spreading everywhere, he was very compassionate. Thus he spoke to his eternal consort, Satī, as follows.

SB 8.7.37: Lord Śiva said: My dear Bhavānī, just see how all these living entities have been placed in danger because of the poison produced from the churning of the ocean of milk.

SB 8.7.38: It is my duty to give protection and safety to all living entities struggling for existence. Certainly it is the duty of the master to protect his suffering dependents.

SB 8.7.39: People in general, being bewildered by the illusory energy, are always engaged in animosity toward one another. But devotees, even at the risk of their own temporary lives, try to save them.

SB 8.7.40: My dear gentle wife Bhavānī, when one performs benevolent activities for others, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Hari, is very pleased. And when the Lord is pleased, I am also pleased, along with all other living creatures. Therefore, let me drink this poison, for all the living entities may thus become happy because of me.

SB 8.7.41: Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued: After informing Bhavānī in this way, Lord Śiva began to drink the poison, and Bhavānī, who knew perfectly well the capabilities of Lord Śiva, gave him her permission to do so.

SB 8.7.42: Thereafter, Lord Śiva, who is dedicated to auspicious, benevolent work for humanity, compassionately took the whole quantity of poison in his palm and drank it.

SB 8.7.43: As if in defamation, the poison born from the ocean of milk manifested its potency by marking Lord Śiva's neck with a bluish line. That line, however, is now accepted as an ornament of the Lord.

SB 8.7.44: It is said that great personalities almost always accept voluntary suffering because of the suffering of people in general. This is considered the highest method of worshipping the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is present in everyone's heart.

SB 8.7.45: Upon hearing of this act, everyone, including Bhavānī [the daughter of Mahārāja Dakṣa], Lord Brahmā, Lord Viṣṇu, and the people in general, very highly praised this deed performed by Lord Śiva, who is worshipped by the demigods and who bestows benedictions upon the people.

SB 8.7.46: Scorpions, cobras, poisonous drugs and other animals whose bites are poisonous took the opportunity to drink whatever little poison had fallen and scattered from Lord Śiva's hand while he was drinking.

SB 4.4.11: The blessed goddess said: Lord Siva is the most beloved of all living entities. He has no rival. No one is very dear to him, and no one is his enemy. No one but you could be envious of such a universal being, who is free from all enmity.

SB 4.4.12: Twice-born Daksha, a man like you can simply find fault in the qualities of others. Lord Siva, however, not only finds no faults with others' qualities, but if someone has a little good quality, he magnifies it greatly. Unfortunately, you have found fault with such a great soul.

SB 4.6.35: The demigods saw Lord Siva situated in his perfection as the master of the senses, knowledge, fruitive activities and the path of achieving perfection. He was the friend of the entire world, and by virtue of his full affection for everyone, he was very auspicious.

SB 4.6.36: He was seated on a deerskin and was practicing all forms of austerity. Because his body was smeared with ashes, he looked like an evening cloud. On his hair was the sign of a half-moon, a symbolic representation.

SB 4.6.37: He was seated on a straw mattress and speaking to all present, including the great sage Narada, to whom he specifically spoke about the Absolute Truth.

SB 4.6.38: His left leg was placed on his right thigh, and his left hand was placed on his left thigh. In his right hand he held rudraksha beads. This sitting posture is called virasana. He sat in the virasana posture, and his finger was in the mode of argument.

SB 4.6.39: All the sages and demigods, headed by Indra, offered their respectful obeisances unto Lord Siva with folded hands. Lord Siva was dressed in saffron garments and absorbed in trance, thus appearing to be the foremost of all sages.

SB 4.6.40: Lord Siva's lotus feet were worshiped by both the demigods and demons, but still, in spite of his exalted position, as soon as he saw that LordBrahma was there among all the other demigods, he immediately stood up and offered him respect by bowing down and touching his lotus feet, just as Vamanadeva offered His respectful obeisances to Kasyapa Muni.

SB 4.6.41: All the sages who were sitting with Lord Siva, such as Narada and others, also offered their respectful obeisances to Lord Brahma. After being so worshiped, Lord Brahma, smiling, began to speak to Lord Siva.

SB 4.6.42: Lord Brahma said: My dear Lord Siva, I know that you are the controller of the entire material manifestation, the combination father and mother of the cosmic manifestation, and the Supreme Brahman beyond the cosmic manifestation as well. I know you in that way.

SB 4.6.43: My dear lord, you create this cosmic manifestation, maintain it, and annihilate it by expansion of your personality, exactly as a spider creates, maintains and winds up its web.

SB 4.6.44: My dear lord, Your Lordship has introduced the system of sacrifices through the agency of Daksha, and thus one may derive the benefits of religious activities and economic development. Under your regulative principles, the institution of the four varnas and asramas is respected. The brahmanas therefore vow to follow this system strictly.

SB 4.6.45: O most auspicious lord, you have ordained the heavenly planets, the spiritual Vaikuntha planets and the impersonal Brahman sphere as the respective destinations of the performers of auspicious activities. Similarly, for others, who are miscreants, you have destined different kinds of hells which are horrible and ghastly. Yet sometimes it is found that their destinations are just the opposite. It is very difficult to ascertain the cause of this.

SB 4.6.46: My dear Lord, devotees who have fully dedicated their lives unto your lotus feet certainly observe your presence as Paramatma in each and every being, and as such they do not differentiate between one living being and another. Such persons treat all living entities equally. They never become overwhelmed by anger like animals, who can see nothing without differentiation.

Shiva Advaita - Shiva is one, there is no second

SB 4.6.47: Persons who observe everything with differentiation, who are simply attached to fruitive activities, who are mean minded, who are always pained to see the flourishing

condition of others and who thus give distress to them by uttering harsh and piercing words have already been killed by providence. Thus there is no need for them to be killed again by an exalted personality like you.

SB 4.6.48: My dear lord, if in some places materialists, who are already bewildered by the insurmountable illusory energy, sometimes commit offenses, a saintly person, with compassion, does not take this seriously. Knowing that they commit offenses because they are overpowered by the illusory energy, he does not show his prowess to counteract them.

SB 4.6.49: My dear lord, you are never bewildered by the formidable influence of the illusory energy, Maya. Therefore you are omniscient and should be merciful and compassionate toward those who are bewildered by the same illusory energy and are very much attached to fruitive activities.

Siva-viShNu abheda

In Srimad bhAgavad purANa, (SB / BP), we have seen the stuti of Siva being supreme Brahman, the creator, preserver and destroyer. However, Siva himself eulogises viShNu many times in purANa-s. In skanda 8, adhyAya 12, Siva along with Maa pArvatI and his gaNa-s visits viShNu in vaikuNTha. Siva wishes to see the mohini svarUpa of bhagavAna Siva and praises viShNu. These sloka-s sung by mahAdeva are given below -

(Based on Gita Press Translation from Gujarati to English)

mahAdeva uvAcha -

SB 8.12.8: O bhagavAn viShNu! Cause and Effect, Dvaita and Advaita - whatever is there is you and only you; similarly, just like Gold in ornaments or jewellery and Gold in it's purest form are non different, they are one and same. Due to ignorance of your true nature, people imagine various differences within you; and in the same way, even though you do not have any upadhis, still under the influence of Gunas, duality is perceived.

SB 8.12.9: He prabhu! (Oh Lord viShNu), some think (contemplate) of you as Brahman, some describe you as dharma, similarly, some simply describe you as Parameshvar who is beyond Purusha and Prakruti, some think of you as describe you as parampuruSha having nine divine qualities - vimalA, utkarShiNi, GYAna, kriyA, yoga, prahvI (the conquerer), satya, iShAna, anugraH and some consider you as free from bondage of klesha-karma (worldly occupation i.e. mAyA)

mimAmsaka - dharma - As per sAyana-mAdhva, the commentators on all five veda-s, one must follow the dharma. Best dharma is vedic yagna known as agnihotra. agnihotra is also considered as the best yagna by bhagavAn buddha. sAyana-mAdhava's commentary on veda-s is more tilted towards vedic rites and rituals. They too have commented on Sankara bhAshya on few Upanishads. In one of the upanishads, they have mentioned the meaning of dharma as agnihotra ***[citation needed]****.*

sAnkhya - parameshvara who is beyond purusha and prakruti

vaiShNava sampradAya-s following pancharAtra Agama shAstra - parampuruSha (supreme Godhead) having nine divine qualities -

1. vimala (pure, stainless, beyond the three guNa-s or the controller of three guNa-s but not affected by them),
2. utkarShiNi (pulls jIva towards himself),
3. GYAna (knowledge of Brahman),
4. kriyA (controller of any activity or movement),
5. yoga (one who is always abiding in truth),
6. prahvI (the conquerer),
7. satya (truth),
8. IShAna (lordship),
9. anugraH (grace)

Note: There is another VaiShNava Agama shAstra 'VaikhAnAsa Agama shAstra' which is considered as pure or less interpolated by many ascholars. Author does not have much information about them whether they also have description of nine divine qualities of parampuruSha.

viShNu purANa mentions the anyone can be termed as bhagavAn (from word bhaga) who has six qualities -

aishvaryasya samagrasya viryasya yashasah shriyah

jnana vairagyayos caiva shannah bhaga itingana

He that possesses the attributes of Sovereignty, Completeness, Glory, Splendour, Knowledge and dispassion in full is known as bhagavAna. (Vishnu Purana 6.5.47)

1. aishvarya - sovereignty, opulence, wealth, supremacy, the glory of God which is incomprehensible by anyone.
2. samagra - completeness (one who is not incomplete), wholeness - that which is unbroken or undivided i.e. cannot be divided into parts
3. yasha - glory, fame
4. shrI - prosperity, splendour, wealth
5. GYAna - knowledge of Supreme Brahman

6. vairAgya - Dispassion. Absence of desires, one who is completely detached from mAyA. Indifference to worldly objects and to life

Note:

1. 'aishvarya' (ऐश्वर्य, aiśvarya) is at times translated as sovereignty which means complete control over everything and total supremacy. It also means glory i.e. splendour or opulence of Ishvara.

2. 'samagra' (समग्र, samagra) is sometimes translated as potency. However, the author feels, potency simply means 'power' or 'strength' is Ishvara's shakti i.e. mAyA, his illusionary energy or creative energy. 'samagra' (समग्र, samagra) means 'sampUrNa' (सम्पूर्ण, sampūrṇa) which means 'totality' or 'whole' i.e. wholeness or 'everything' or 'complete'. Here it implies 'completeness' i.e. sampUrNatA (सम्पूर्णता, sampūrṇatā) as 'that which is complete' - or unbroken i.e. undivided or that which cannot be divided into parts.

3. 'yasha' (यश, yaśa) generally means, name, fame or glory - the one who's glories are well known and sung even by gods.

3. shrI (श्री, śrī) simply does not mean wealth i.e. gold and silver or Goddess of wealth maa laxmIdevI. Spiritual knowledge is also a wealth, an asset. shrI also means prosperity or splendour.

5. 'GYAna' (ज्ञान, GYāna, Jñāna) is not just any knowledge i.e. material knowledge or knowledge of scriptures. It means knowledge of one's True nature, the Supreme Brahman.

6. 'vairAgya' (वैराग्य, vairāgya) is sometimes translated as renunciation. However, the author feels it is not a correct translation. VairAgya is not renunciation. Renunciation means 'to renounce' i.e. de-select or reject. 'de-select' is better word. 'To Renounce' means 'tyAja' or 'tyajati' (त्यज or त्यजति, tyaja or tyajati) the act of renouncing i.e. renunciation is known as 'tyAga' (त्याग, tyāga). Act of renouncing is also known as 'aparigraha' (अपरिग्रह, aparigraha). 'parigraha' (परिग्रह, parigraha) means possession, to accept, acquisition. a-parigraha means non-acceptance, renunciation, devoid of possession or it can be taken as 'absence of quality of possession - non-possessive nature'.

Srila Prabhupada's English Translation -

SB 8.12.8: My dear bhagavAn viShNu, Your Lordship alone is the cause and the effect. Therefore, although You appear to be two, You are the absolute one. As there is no difference between the gold of a golden ornament and the gold in a mine, there is no difference between cause and effect; both of them are the same. Only because of ignorance do people concoct differences and dualities. You are free from material contamination, and since the entire cosmos is caused by You and cannot exist without You, it is an effect of Your transcendental qualities.

SB 8.12.9: Those who are known as the impersonalist Vedantists regard You as the impersonal Brahman. Others, known as the Mimamsaka philosophers, regard You as religion. The Sankhya philosophers regard You as the transcendental person who is beyond prakriti and purusha and who is the controller of even the demigods. The followers of the codes of devotional service known as the Pancaratras regard You as being endowed with nine different potencies. And the Patanjala philosophers, the followers of Patanjali Muni, regard You as the supreme independent Personality of Godhead, who has no equal or superior.

Verses in Siva gItA similar to anya-devatA verses in bhagavad gItA (9.25)

Shiva Gita or Siva gItA (SG) is an authentic text with more than three commentaries written on it. It is a part of padma purANa. In the 12th adhyAya, upAsanA GYAna phala, we find verses similar to BG 9.25. Infact SG is more clearly explains the meaning of these verses.

Before going to chapter 12, lets have a look at chapter 11, which forms the basis of asking questions on saguNa upAsanA. In SG 11.45, bhagavAn Siva says to bhagavAn rAma that

उपासको न यात्येव यस्मात्पुनरधोगतिम
उपासनरतो भूत्वा तस्मादास्स्व सुखी नृप [11.45]

He rAmachandra ! those who think nirguNa upAsanA (worship of formless, attributeless brahman) is difficult, they should practice saguNa upAsanA (worship to any form of ISvara) first. Anyone practicing saguNa upAsanA is not demoted to lower worlds (adhogatI) i.e. after leaving physical body, jIva's movement will not be downwards - SG 11.45

(upAsanA = worship)

Meaning:

Those who find practising nirguNa upAsanA, they must first practise saguNa upAsanA. Souls of those worshipping any form of ISvara will never move downwards (to lower worlds).

After this kathan (statement), bhagavAn rAma asks bhagavAn Siva (maheSvara) how to practice upAsanA.

श्रीराम उवाच ...
भगवन्देवदेवेश नमस्तेऽस्तु महेश्वर .

उपासनविधिं ब्रूहि देशं कालं च तस्य तु [1]
अङ्गानि नियमांश्चैव मयि तेऽनुग्रहो यदि

srI rAmachandra said - He deva of deva-s maheSvara (Siva) ! I prostate before you. Please can you describe vidhi (step by step procedure) and describe time and space (place) i.e. in which time and in which way upAsanA should be done. SG 12.1

Meaning:

Please explain in which way, at what time and place should upAsanA be done.

ईश्वर उवाच …
शृणु राम प्रवक्ष्यामि देशं कालमुपासने [2]
सर्वाकारोऽहमेवैकः सच्चिदानन्दविग्रहः .

मदंशेन परिच्छिन्ना देहाः सर्वदिवौकसाम [3]

Isvara said (bhagavAn Siva said - He rAma ! I will explain to you the procedure of upAsanA and will also tell you at which time and place it must be done. Listen with present mindedness. All the devatA-s are my rUpa only (they are me only). In reality, they are not different than me - SG 12.2-3

ये त्वन्यदेवताभक्ता यजन्ते श्रद्धयान्विताः .
तेऽपि मामेव राजेन्द्र यजन्त्यविधिपूर्वकम [4]

Those who are devotees of other devatA-s, and they faithfully worship these devatA-s, O king ! they worship me with bheda buddhi (dual stand point) i.e. they consider these devatA-s different than me - SG 12.4

यस्मात्सर्वमिदं विश्वं मत्तो न व्यतिरिच्यते .
सर्वक्रियाणां भोक्ताहं सर्वस्याहं फलप्रदः [5]

Because in this entire world (samsAra), there is nothing except me, due to this reason, I am enjoyer of all actions (kriyA-s) and also the giver of fruits of actions (phala) - SG 12.5

येनाकारेण ये मर्त्या मामेवैकमुपासते

तेनाकारेण तेभ्योऽहं प्रसन्नो वाञ्छितं ददे [6]

The one who worships (me) with whatever bhAva (spiritual emotion - *sAttvika, rAjasika, tAmasika* or intention), I, in that form of devatA, give them fruits according their bhAva - SG 12.6

Now, bhagAvan Siva goes one step further and says,

विधिनाऽविधिना वापि भक्त्या ये मामुपासते .
तेभ्यः फलं प्रयच्छामि प्रसन्नोऽहं न संशयः [7]

Those who worship me with vidhi (step by step procedure as ordained by SAstra-s), or those who worship me without any vidhi, (avidhi upAsanA), or worships me by any way, pleased with their devotion, I give them [appropriate] fruits [of their devotion] - SG 12.7

From this we can conclude that there is no difference between Siva and kruShNa. In bhagavad gItA, kruShNa is playing the role of gUru and ISvara and in Siva gItA, Siva is playing role of gUru and ISvara and bhagavAn rAma is playing the role of disciple for the good of all.

Interpolations in padma purANa

Padma Purana is considered as most corrupted Purana, specially the uttara khanda. This is because there are two version available – Bengali and South Indian, each differing in content says scholars. Swaping from Sankrit to Bengali and back to Sanskrit could have been the cause of corruption. Bengalis often replace 'v' with 'b' e.g. Buddha 'Vihar' changed 'Bihar'. 'Vanga' changed to 'Benga', which got changed to 'Bengal'. 'Vanga Bandhu' changed to 'Banga Bandhu'.

Inconsistencies and contradictory statements in various purANa-s and in between mahAbhArata exists. Some people are of the opinion that this inconsistency are due to kalpa bhEda (difference due to mixing of info of various eons).

If we accept this logic, then we will have to accuse bhagavAna vEda vyAsa of not being avatAra of sriman nArAyaNa. Even if we say that purANa-s are created by brahma (along with vEda-s), still is it not tarka-sangat (logically wise) to accept this claim. Brahma is not an ordinary jIva. He is one of trimUtrI (trinity). The creator of this universe simply cannot make any mistake, else everything will be a mess. Also confusion and / or loss of memory and mixing of information or lIlA-s by avatArs cannot be accepted.

So how to neutralize or say solve contradictory verses in SAstra-s? We can adopt nAhI nindA nyAya and do not denigrate any deity. We can accept that Siva and viShNu are different forms of same Brahman. in support of this logic, we can find support in SAstra-s.

Interpreting 'tamas'

tamasa (tamas) gUNa is often meant for negative lower emotions like destruction, revengeful attitude, darkness, laziness, etc. tamas has many more meanings. Inactivity is called as tamas. When one is sleeping one one is under the influence of tamas gUNa. In deep sleep (suSupti), one is under tamasa gUNa. The only difference between suSupti and samAdhi is consciousness or wakefulness. One is aware of absence of everything.

In this context the word tamas also means avidyA (ignorance) or AvaraNa (veil) or aGYAna (absence of knowledge). After the mental agitation is reduced or nullified, calm and stable mind free of distractions, can contemplate on Brahman. Only aGYAna is left to be removed. This aGYAna can only be removed with it's opposite GYAna or knowledge of Self (AtmA or Atma tatva).

bhagavAna Siva is said to be the master of tamas gUNa. Siva is also called as giver of Knowledge, GYAna svarUpa, tripUrAntaka (destroyer of 3 cities - subtle bodies), Adi gurU and Siva (auspiciousness). Hence only bhagavAna Siva can grant knowledge and hence moksha. In other words the act of removal of ignorance is called as Siva.

In this context, tAmasika purANa-s cannot be considered as misleading. Infact it is only bhagavAna Siva who can grant us moksha. It is said that Siva krupA means gurU krupA.

On the other hand, if we take literal meaning of tamas like laziness, inactivity, or even destruction, then still since bhagaVAna Siva is the Lord of tamas gUNa, only he can uproot them from us. In other words the one who removes negative qualities and giver of grace is called as Siva or rudra. In this case, the first thing to remove or transform is our negative emotions. Hence tAmasika purANa-s are the first to be studied.

Let us come back to the word tamas. Lets try to study a hymm of rg veda called nAsadIya sUkta. It defines the creation of universe.

तमं॑ आसी॒त्तमं॑सा गू॒ळ्हमग्रे॑ऽप्रके॒तं स॑लि॒लं सर्व॑मा इ॒दं।

तु॒च्छ्येना॒भ्वपि॑हि॒तं यदासी॒त्तप॑स॒स्तन्म॑हि॒ना जा॑य॒तैक॑ं॥ ३॥

tamaṁ āsīt**tama**ṁ**sā** gū॒ḷhamagre”prake॒taṁ sa॑li॒laṁ sarva॑mā i॒daṁ |

tu॒cchyenā॒bhvapi॑hita॒ṁ yadāsī॒ttapa॑sa॒stanma॑hi॒nā jā॑ya॒taika॑ṁ || 3 ||

At first there was only darkness (tamas) wrapped in darkness (tamas).

All this was only unillumined water.

That One which came to be, enclosed in nothing, arose at last, born of the power of heat.

(Later verses explain the creation.)

Why is it called as darkness covered with darkness? Here how should we interpret tamas gUNa?

We all know that ISvara created this world through is mAyA. mAyA is trigUNAtimikA i.e. having three gUNa-s. It is never said that ISvara first created his mAyA. mAyA was always present with ISvara. Hence mAyA is called as anAdi (beginningless).

In above context, lets understand the word 'tamas'.

tamas here would mean inactivity or dormant. It could also mean unmanifested universe. w.r.t to mAyA, we can conclude that all three gUNa-s were present but in dormant form. But there was something which covered this. That which covered veiled these three gUNa was tamas i.e. tamas gUNa was the most dominant. The first two verses in nAsadiya sukta indicate supreme brahman above or beyond the reach of three guNa but seems to be veiled by mAyA just like sun seems to be veiled by clouds.

Hence the first tamas is indirectly referring to sat or truth which is Brahman and second one is referred by mAyA which is inactive and hence mAyA has not manifested universe.

To further simplify, we can say that, when there was no creation there was only brahman (sat, truth), and his mAyA was dormant.

If we take a meaning that there was a time when there was no brahman, it would contradict vedAnta. If we say that there was only tamas gUNa and no other gUNA was present, it would mean that other gUNA-s were absent and hence mAyA was absent. You can create things with the material that you have. If mAyA did not have other two gUNa-s (sattva and rajas) then mAyA would not be able to create anything. It would also contradict those verses which say that there was there was no time then there was no ISvara, like in gita krUShNa bhagavAna has said.

Hence we have to take it that during the time, when there was no creation, there was

sat (brahman and

mAyA in dormant state, veiling brahman (like clouds seems to veil sun)

nAsada means nA-asata meaning no non-existence. This verse also refutes zero state where there is only void and no Self (brahman), establishes nirgUna brahman as always present.

nAsadiya sukta can be found here

From the above analysis, we can understand that tamas always does not mean misleading, darkness, or as some say - leading to hell :)

Also **tamas guNa is the first one that has to be transformed.** If we take tamas as laziness, then our regular study of SAstra-s, and daily meditation will reduce tamas from our chitta and increase sattva guNa. By this logic too, first set of purANa-s that should be studied are tAmasika purANa-s (if we take this classification as partly correct)

Reading any purANa-s will not mislead anyone, as advaita accepts all forms of ISvara as equally potent and manifestations of same Brahman.

purANA-s, itihAsa-s, veda-s, vedAnta and smriti-s and Agama-s should be interpreted in a way that they should not contradict each other. Earlier vaishnava saints like nArAyaNa bhaTTa, who was the first critic of Adi Sankara and raised objections to kevala advaita in his brahma-sutra bhASya (later AcArya-s borrowed objections from him says SSS). In his commentary on taittriya samhitA, nArAyaNa bhaTTA did not interpret srI rudram in a way some later AcArya-s started interpreting them taking Siva, rudra as just adjectives since their siddhAnta makes them to say that whatever is supreme *must* go to viShNu. It is said that ranga rAmAnuja munI did not agree with the interpretation of srI rudram and panch brahma upanishad done by bhaTTA bhAskara.

sattva, rajasa and tamasa - alternate meanings

It is a general notion that sattva guNa is the best guNa, the divine guNa, rajasa denotes materialistic qualities and activities and tamasa guNa denotes inertia, laziness, negative demonic qualities like revengeful attitude. However these guNa-s have alternate meaning also.

rajasa can mean 'mental activity' which can mean 'mental agitation'. Mental agitation is the disturbance created by thoughts during meditation. This is the first guNa to be controlled.

sattva can also mean 'to preserve' (as bhagavAn viShNu preserves). sattva guNa also has quality of 'renunciation'. Hence by renunciation of that which is not 'I' one can reach the supreme state - Brahman.

tamasa also means ignorance 'avidyA' and 'aGYAna', the root cause of misery and mortality. It is a veil which separates us or keeps us away from our true nature. It is necessary to remove the veil of ignorance so as to know our true nature.

Mind can be steady like an un-flickering flame protected from external wind, but that does not mean one is steadfast in brahman. After quieting the mind i.e. conquering rajasa guNa, one has to renounce that which is 'not-I'. One has to separate 'I' from that which is not-I. AS one separates I and detaches itself, the veil remains. This is done even by dropping

the effort to detach from non-I. Once the veil of ignorance is removed, GYAna springs fourth in a flash.

Since brAhmA jI is the lord of rajasa, hence by reading purANa-s dedicated to him, one can rise above rajasa. In the same way, by singing glories of viShNu, sattva and tamasa guNa can rise above sattva and tamasa guNa. After rising beyond guNa-s one is self-established in Self, The Brahman.

There is no question of going to hell. Afterall the Gods help us ascend and not descend. vaiShNava-s say, Siva is paramabhAgavata, the greatest devotee of bhagavAn viShNu and so is brAhmA jI. In this case, can a great devotee of viShNu lead anyone to hell? It is not self-contradictory? If You consider them as highly evolved souls, then too the question arises, if such divine souls cannot guide us, humans, properly, then how is it possible to any human being or any avatAra of demi-god able to guide us to viShNu-pada? Hence the verses in padma purANa can be rejected.

It is accepted by all that anything that contradicts veda-s is to be discarded. Hence if purANA-s say something that is contradictory to veda-s or even mahabhArata, then these verses are to be discarded. Neither veda-s, nor mahAbhArata is categorized into sAttvika, rAjasika and Tamasika parts. Hence such verses categorizing purANa-s into three guNa-s which exquisite mention of those praising Siva are tAmasika and those reading them will go to hell are unacceptable.

purANa-s cannot contradict mahAbhArata which says brahmA and viShNu are born from Siva

Before we understand quotes from mahAbhArata glorifying Siva / mahAdeva / ISAna, lets understand that mahAbhArata is a 'itihAsa' which means 'history', a special status given to a smriti and mahAbhArata, earlier called as 'jaya' and then 'bhArata' (as quoted by Adi Sankara in viShNu sahasranAma stotra bhASya) and later 'mahAbhArata'. purANa-s do not enjoy this status.

Excerpts are taken from mahAbhArata translated by Sri Kisari Mohan Ganguli, uploaded in public domain by sacredtexts.com. Many thanks to sacredtexts for their gigantic efforts which has made it possible for all of us to read mahAbhArata. They have also uploaded most of the sanskrit verses in both devanAgarI and romanized sanskrit. I would also like to thank the author of mahapashupatastra blog, as it was he who pointed out these verses on his blog dedicated to defending Lord Siva.

Book 1, Adi Parva, Chapter 1, verses 15 to 19 (MBH 1.01.15-19)

15 [रसयह]
दवैपायनेन यत परोक्तं **पुराणं** परमर्षिणा
सुरैर बरह्मर्षिभिश चैव शरुत्वा यद अभिपूजितम

16 तस्याख्यान वरिष्ठस्य विचित्रपदपर्वणः
सूक्ष्मार्थ नययायुक्तस्य वेदार्थैर भूषितस्य च

17 भारतस्येतिहासस्य पुण्यां गरन्थार्थ संयुताम
संस्कारॊपगतां बराह्मीं **नानाशास्त्रॊपबृंहिताम**

18 जनमेजयस्य यां राज्ञॊ वैशम्पायन उक्तवान
यथावत स ऋषिस तुष्ट्या सत्रे दवैपायनाज्ञया

19 वेदैश चतुर्भिः समितां वयासस्याद्भुत कर्मणः
संहितां शरॊतुम इच्छामॊ धर्म्यां पापभयापहाम

- MBH 1.01.15-19

"The Rishi replied, '**The Purana**, first promulgated by the great Rishi Dwaipayana, and which after having been heard both by the gods and the Brahmarshis **was highly esteemed, being the most eminent narrative that exists**, diversified both in diction and division, possessing subtile meanings logically combined, and gleaned from the Vedas, is a sacred work. Composed in elegant language, it includeth the subjects of other books. **It is elucidated by other Shastras, and comprehendeth the sense of the four Vedas. We are desirous of hearing that history also called Bharata**, the holy composition of the wonderful Vyasa, which dispelleth the fear of evil, just as it was cheerfully recited by the Rishi Vaisampayana, under the direction of Dwaipayana himself, at the snake-sacrifice of Raja Janamejaya?'"

Further, even Vyasa speaks the following about his composition to lord Brahma. He clearly states that in his Mahabharata he has compiled various ancient treatises including Puranas.

"Then the greatly glorious Vyasa, addressing Brahma Parameshthi, said, "O divine Brahma, by me a poem hath been composed which is greatly respected. The mystery of the Veda, and what other subjects have been explained by me; the various rituals of the Upanishads with the Angas; **the compilation of the Puranas and history formed by me** and named after the three divisions of time, past, present, and future; the determination of the nature of decay, fear, disease, existence, and non-existence, a description of creeds and of the various modes of life; rule for the four castes, and the import of all the Puranas; an account of asceticism and of the duties of a religious student; the dimensions of the sun and moon, the planets, constellations, and stars, together with the duration of the four ages; the Rik, Sama and Yajur Vedas; also the Adhyatma; the sciences called Nyaya, Orthœphy and Treatment of diseases; charity and **Pasupatadharma**; birth celestial and human, for particular purposes; also a description of places of pilgrimage and other holy places of rivers, mountains, forests, the ocean, of heavenly cities and the kalpas; the art of war; the different kinds of nations and languages: the nature of the manners of the people; and the all-pervading spirit;--all these have been represented. But, after all, no writer of this work is to be found on earth'." (MBH 1:01)

So, it is crystal clear from above verses that Mahabharata is not just a story of Kuru dynasty, but it is a vast compilation of Puranas also.

Further it is stated that Puranas depend on Mahabharata as like as body depends on food for sustenance as stated below. This means that a Purana should solely depend on Mahabharata but in any case a Purana should not contradict Mahabharata since Mahabharata being itihasa it is more authoritative than Purana.

Mahabharata, Book One, Adi Parva, Chapter 2 (Section II), verses 238-240

238 अस्याख्यानस्य विषये पुराणं वर्तते दविजाः
अन्तरिक्षस्य विषये परजा इव चतुर्विधाः

239 करिया गुणानां सर्वेषाम इदम आख्यानम आश्रयः
इन्द्रियाणां समस्तानां चित्रा इव मनः करियाः

240 अनाश्रित्यैतद आख्यानं कथा भुवि न विद्यते
आहारम अनपाश्रित्य शरीरस्येव धारणम

- MBH 1:02:238-240

Source: http://www.sacred-texts.com/hin/mbs/mbs01002.htm

Mahabharata, Book One, Adi Parva, Chapter 2 (Section II), verses 238-240

"O ye Brahman, **as the four kinds of creatures (viviparous, oviparous, born of hot moisture and vegetables) are dependent on space for their existence, so the Puranas depend upon this history.** As all the senses depend for their exercise upon the various modifications of the mind, so do all acts (ceremonials) and moral qualities depend upon this treatise. **There is not a story current in the world but doth depend on this history, even as body upon the food it taketh".**

Source: http://www.sacred-texts.com/hin/m01/m01003.htm

Mahabharata, Book 1, Adi Parva, Section II

Therefore it is very much clear that when a story exists in Mahabharata and same story exists in a Purana and both contradict each other, then Mahabharata being itihasa, and more authoritative than Puranas, it is Mahabharata's story which needs to be accepted as true. and it's the story of Purana which needs to be rejected, and not the vice versa!

[under construction]

It is said in Mahabharata 13.14.183-184 that

183 यॊ ऽसृजद दक्षिणाद अङ्गाद बरह्माणं लॊकसंभवम
वामपार्श्वात तथा विष्णुं लॊकरक्षार्थम ईश्वरः

युगान्ते चैव संप्राप्ते रुद्रम अङ्गात सृजत परभुः

184 स रुद्रः संहरन कृत्स्नं जगत सथावरजङ्गमम
कालॊ भूत्वा महातेजाः संवर्तक इवानलः

Thou art he that hadst created from thy right side the Grandsire Brahma, the Creator of all things. Thou art he that hadst created from thy left side Vishnu for protecting the Creation. Thou art that puissant Lord who didst create Rudra when the end of the Yuga came and when the Creation was once more to be dissolved. That Rudra, who sprang from thee destroyed the Creation with all its mobile and immobile beings, assuming the form of Kala of great energy,...

(condt)

"The blessed Vishnu said, 'I saluted Mahadeva, saying,--Salutations to thee, O thou that art the eternal origin of all things. The Rishis say that thou art the Lord of the Vedas. The righteous say that thou art Penance, thou art Sattwa, thou art Rajas, thou art Tamas, and thou art Truth. Thou art Brahman, thou art Rudra ...

The same is said in Siva purANa, linga purANa and viShNu purANa. From Siva ji's left and right side, brahmA ji and viShNu ji emerged.

The rudra and viShNu of trinity are different from the rudra (Siva) and viShNu or nArAyaNa who is the creator of the trinity.

In this way, we can neutralize the contradiction which says that rudra is born of brahmA or viShNu or vice versa.

[/under construction]

In addition to this, **there is no verse in bhagavad gItA which even hints of itself being internally categorized as per three guNa-s**. bhagavad gItA being part of mahAbhArata and an essence of upanishads must have shown this categorization. Upanishads are categorized into sAmAnya, vaiShNav, Saiva, shakta, yoga, etc categories, but their content is not rated based on purity. Hence such verses found in padma purANa can be rejected.

mahAbhArata and veda-s praise rudra / Siva. Verses from veda-s are quoted below.

purANa-s cannot contradict vedA-s which glorify rudra

This is the well known accepted fact that in any case of controversy, shruti vacana (vacana means a statement or any verse from in shruti (veda-s) is considered as top authority. Next comes smriti-s. Traditionally, smrii-s means 'collections of memory'. Our great rishi-s who had mastered our veda-s have written moral and ethical codes of conduct for harmonious and holistic living of society. Since veda-s are of top most authority, everything is written in connection with them, so that a purified mind can directly follow the path shown by veda-s, that is karma-kANDa and later on GYAna kANDa (vedAnta).

One meaning of 'veda' is 'knowledge' i.e. GYAna. vedAnta means veda+anta meaning end part of veda. Since veda means knowledge, vedAnta means 'end of knowledge'. To give a full meaning, vedAnta means - after learning which nothing more needs to be learned. It is end of knowledge. brahma-vidyA or knowledge of brahman (Self / AtmA) are considered as supreme knowledge. Hence vedAnta imparts brahma-vidyA. upanishad is another name of vedAnta.

purANa-s are unique in a way that they talk to us like a friend, in form of stories and teach us about brahma-vidyA.

In reference to the above controversial verses from padma purANa, which says tAmasika purANa-s lead one to hell,

There are no shruti vacan-s that says worshipers of rudra will go to hell or that rudra can only grant material desires. mantra-s like Om namah SivAya and mahAmrutyunjaya mantra are found in veda-s. They are not paurANika mantra-s and hence they hold greater authority then paurANika mantra-s.

In fact, there are no shruti vacan-s that say that worshipping any for of God, be it gaNeSa, nArAyaNa, Siva, Sakti, mahAlaxmI, etc will lead one to hell. It is our intention behind their worship that matters. bhagavAn in gItA says that one gets fruits of karma-s depending upon the intention or the way one worships a deity.

Since we consider these verses as interpolation, lets see if we find some verses in support of our claim from veda-s. There are many references from our veda-s glorifying Rudra. WE will take a few of them.

Rudra is Immortal

RV 1.43.3 By worship of the Gods may we, O Bounteous One, O Rudra, gain thy grace, Ruler of valiant men. Come to our families, bringing them bliss: may we, whose heroes are uninjured, bring thee sacred gifts,

RV 1.43.4 Hither we call for aid the wise, the wanderer, impetuous Rudra, perfecter of sacrifice. May he repel from us the anger of the Gods: verily we desire his favourable grace.
RV 1.43.6 Grant us, **Immortal One,** the food which mortals eat: be gracious unto me, my seed, my progeny.

RV 1.114.6 This praise, the sweetest of the sweet, and cause of increase (to the reciter), is addressed to Rudra,the father of the Maruts; **immortal Rudra** ,grant us food sufficient for mortals, and bestow happiness on me, my son, and my grandson.

RV 4.28.3: Reverence we offer, O Bhava, to thy roaring, to thy breath, and to thy injurious qualities; reverence to thee, **O Rudra, thousand-eyed, immortal!**

Rudra is Self-Dependent

RV 7.46.1. To Rudra bring these songs, whose bow is firm and strong, the **self-dependent God** with swiftly-flying shafts, ...

Rudra, the granter of moksha

RV 7.59.12 **We Worship Tryambaka(shiva)**, Who spreads Fragrance and Increases nourishment, **May He LIBERATE (moksha) us, like the cucumber from its stem, from Mortal life, and give us Immortality.**

Then the discipline students (Brahmacharins of Yajnavalkya) asked him: Pray, tell us, **what is that mantra by reciting which one attains immortality ? He replied: By (reciting) Satarudriya.** These mantras are indeed the names of (Rudra to achieve) immortality. **By (reciting) these (mantras) one becomes immortal.** - Jabala Upanishad III-1

Mahamrutyunjaya mantra

The Mahamrityunjaya Mantra (Sanskrit: महामृत्युंजय मंत्र, Mahāmṛtyuṃjaya Mantra "great death-conquering mantra"), also called the Tryambakam Mantra, is a verse of the Rigveda (RV 7.59.12).It is addressed to Tryambaka "the three-eyed one", an epithet of Rudra, later identified with Shiva. The verse also recurs in the Yajurveda (TS 1.8.6.i; VS 3.60)

This Mahamritunjaya mantra is found in Rig Veda (7-59-12), Sukla Yajur Veda (3-60) and also from The Krishna Yajur Veda (taittiriya samhitA) TS 1.8.6.i. and vAjasayeni samhitA 3.60

The mantra reads

"ॐ त्र्यम्बकम् यजामहे सुगन्धिम् पुष्टिवर्धनम् ।

ऊर्वारुकमिव बन्धनान् **मृत्योर्मुक्षीय मामृतात्** ||"

Om tryambakam yajamahe sugandhim pusti vardhanam
Urvarukamiva bandhanan mrutyor mukshiya mamritat

Translation:

Om. We worship and adore you, O three-eyed one, O Shiva. You are sweet gladness, the fragrance of life, who nourishes us, restores our health, and causes us to thrive. As, in due time, the stem of the cucumber weakens, and the gourd is freed from the vine, so free us from attachment and death, and do not withhold immortality (grant us immortality).

Source

Rudra is all says atharvaSiras upanishad

1. The devas with their upturned hands extended upwards pray to Rudra.

Om! He who is Rudra, he alone is god. He is Brahma and we salute him again and again. He who is Rudra, he alone is god. He is Vishnu and we salute him again and again. He who is Rudra, he alone is God. He is truth and we salute him again and again. He who is Rudra, he alone is God. He is everything and we salute him again and again.

You are also called Maheswara (great lord) because you bless your devotees by giving them knowledge, because you created words and brought out knowledge, and because you have forsaken everything and reached a highest state of existence through yoga and your grace.

5.1 This god is the one who pervades in all directions. He is the one who came earlier than every thing. He is the one who is in the womb. He is the one who is in all the creatures which have come out till now and all those who are going to be created in future. He is also the one who sees the inside but the one who has a face which looks outside.

Rudra is one and only one

5.2 Rudra is one and only one. There is none second to him. He rules all worlds by his power. He pervades fully in all beings. He is the one who, at the time of deluge, absorbs all beings. He is the one who creates all beings and upkeeps them.

5.3 He alone exists, in all organs where birth takes place. He travels among all beings and is the reason for their existence. The seeker would get immeasurable peace by searching

and surrendering to this god, who gives everything to the one who asks and who is praiseworthy.

5.4 He converts fire, air, water, earth, ether and everything that exists here in to ash. He who sees this and mentally realizes it and observes the penance to Pasupathi (Lord of all beings) and who coats ash all over his body with this ash attains the state of Brahman. By worshipping Pasupathi (lord of all beings) like this, the ties of bondage of all beings get cut and they attain salvation.

There is none greater than him, on whom all the worlds are strung like beads. Over ages, nothing so far where greater than him and nothing is going to be greater than him. He has thousands of legs but one and only one head. He pervades everywhere.

(Who is) unthinkable, unmanifest, of endless forms, the good, the peaceful, Immortal, the origin of the worlds, without beginning, middle, and end, the only one, all-pervading, Consciousness, and Bliss, the formless and the wonderful - Kaivalya Up. 6

Meditating on the highest Lord, allied to Uma, powerful, three-eyed, blue-necked, and tranquil, the holy man reaches Him who is the source of all, the witness of all and is beyond darkness (i.e. Avidya) - Kaivalya Up. 7

He who studies the Shatarudriya, is purified as by the Fires, is purified from the sin of drinking, purified from the sin of killing a Brahmana, from deeds done knowingly or unawares. **Through this he has his refuge in Shiva, the Supreme Self.** One who belongs to the highest order of life should repeat this always or once (a day). Kaivalya Up. 25

No one escapes Rudra

AV 4.28.5: Ye from whose blows no one either among gods or men escapes; ye who rule all these twofooted and fourfooted creatures, deliver us from grief and trouble.

Rudra is puruSa, preservervor of veda-s and praNav says taittiriya AraNyaka

taittiriya AraNyaka (10:24:1) clearly states - *purusho vai rudrah,* which means, 'Rudra is the Purusha'

taittariya AraNyaka (10:21:1) says*"brahmadhipatirbrahmano'dhipatirbrahma shivo me astu sadashivom"*, which means, "the preserver of the Vedas and the one overlord of Hiranyagarbha, be benign to me. That Sadasiva is Hiranyagarbha, be benign to me. That Sadasiva is described thus and denoted by Pranava (OM)".

taittiriya-AraNyaka (X.14) calls Purusha as *Bhutanamadhipati*, i.e. Rudra. (bhuta means bodies or panch mahabhuta-s. bhutanamadhipatI means 'Lord of panch mahAbhuta-s'

Translations taken from [mahApAshupAtastra blog]

[under construction]

mahAnArAyaNA Upanishad glorifies bhagavAn Siva many times

XXI-1: **May the Supreme who is the ruler of all knowledge, controller of all created beings, the preserver of the Vedas and the one overlord of Hiranyagarbha, be benign to me. I am the Sadasiva described thus and denoted by Pranava.**

XXV-1: We sing a hymn that confers on us happiness in the highest degree to Rudra who is worthy of praise, who is endowed with the highest knowledge, who rains objects to the worshippers most excellently, who is more powerful and who is dwelling in the heart. Indeed all this is Rudra. Salutations be to Rudra who is such.

XIX-1: Now, O Sarva, my salutations be at all times and all places to Thy Rudra forms, benign, terrific, more terrific and destructive.

XX-1: May we know or realize the Supreme Person. For that, may we meditate upon Mahadeva and to that meditation may Rudra impel us.

XXI-1: May the Supreme who is the ruler of all knowledge, controller of all created beings, the preserver of the Vedas and the one overlord of Hiranyagarbha, be benign to me. I am the Sadasiva described thus and denoted by Pranava.

XXII-1: Salutations again and again to Hiranyabahu [One who has ornaments of gold on the arms or possessing a form having the golden hue], Hiranyavarna [He who is the source of the syllables of the Vedas which are as precious as gold], Hiranyarupa [He who is shining in splendour], Hiranyapati [the Lord of riches wholesome and charming], Ambikapati [the consort of Ambika, the Mother of the universe], Umapati [The master of Uma, Brahma-vidya personified as such], Pasupati [the Lord of all created beings].

UmA-maheSvara is Supreme Brahman

त्रयोविंशोऽनुवाकः ।

ऋत॰ सत्यं परं ब्रह्म पुरुषं कृष्णपिङ्गलम् ।

ऊर्ध्वरेतं विरूपाक्षं विश्वरूपाय वै नमो नमः ॥ १॥

XXIII-1: **Supreme Brahman, the Absolute Reality, has become an androgynous Person in the form of Umamaheshvara**, dark blue and reddish brown in hue, absolutely chaste and possessing uncommon eyes. **Salutations to Him alone who is the Soul of the universe or whose form is the universe** - mahAnArAyaNA Upanishad - 23.1

rudra is everything

चतुर्विंशोऽनुवाकः ।

सर्वो वै रुद्रस्तस्मै रुद्राय नमो अस्तु । **पुरुषो वै रुद्रः**

सन्महो नमो नमः ।

XXIV-1: **All this verily is Rudra. To Rudra who is such we offer our salutation. We salute again and again that Being, Rudra, who alone is the light and the Soul of creatures.** The material universe the created beings and whatever there is manifoldly and profusely created in the past and in the present in the form of the world, all that is indeed this Rudra. Salutations be to Rudra who is such.

पञ्चविंशोऽनुवाकः ।

कद्रुद्राय प्रचेतसे मीढुष्टमाय तव्यसे । वोचेम शन्तम॰ हृदे ।

सर्वोहयेष रुद्रस्तस्मै रुद्राय नमो अस्तु ॥ १॥

XXV-1: We sing a hymn that confers on us happiness in the highest degree to Rudra who is worthy of praise, who is endowed with the highest knowledge, who rains objects to the worshippers most excellently, who is more powerful and who is dwelling in the heart. Indeed all this is Rudra. Salutations be to Rudra who is such.

XXVI-1: He who has the sacrificial ladle made of Vikankata (Flacourtia Spida) tree for his Agnihotra rite offers oblations effective in producing the desired fruit. Further, these oblations contribute to establish (his spiritual knowledge through the generation of mental purity).

XXVII-1: Krinushva paja iti panja.

[Five mantras commencing with the lemma krinushva paja are only indicated in the texts by reference to index words. They are recited for effecting the destruction of hostile influences. They are from the Taittiriya-Samhita I-ii-14. Originally they are from the Rig-Veda IV-iv-1-5.]

XXVIII-1: The sage Vasistha declared that Aditi is the mother and protector of gods, of celestial minstrels, of men, of departed ancestors, of demons and others; that she is possessed of hardness or cohesiveness, that she is excellent and honoured, that she

belongs to the Divine Spirit, that she is fit to be praised, contingent and supporting all, that she is rich in crops, broad and possessing a wealth of objects, that she is universal and comprising of the primary element, that she is exceedingly blissful, transformed into the bodies of creatures, illustrious, enduring and hence immortal.

[/under construction]

There are many shruti vacan-s which praise rudra as one without second, sustainer of all, granter of moksha, the highest God and the benevolent. Certainly purANa-s praising in his glory cannot lead one ot hell. They will contradict all the other shruti vacan-s that we have listed here.

Certainly these verses of padma purANa-s are interpolations.

Few thoughts about creation, trinity, and words bhagavAn and deva (devatA)

If we understand theory of creation, there is always a male-female pair. Krishna says, I along with my yOga mAyA, I create this universe. It is said that viShNu creates the universe using his power. It is not said that viShNu creates universe through laxmI devI. Though by collecting tits-bits we can connect mAyA with laxmI, laxmI mAtA does not come into picture directly as often as Siva-Sakti pair which creates and destroys the worlds. Even brahmA didn't create this universe with the help of sarasvatI.

Now all three cannot create different worlds using different energies. Also creation of universe is the job of Isvara and not devatA-s. Hence the creative power is called as brahmA, the sustaining power is called as viShNu, and destroyer is called as maheSa. It should be noted that the word used is maheSa and not Siva or rudra.

Since brahmA created the universe in his mind or this world is a projection of his mind, hence brahma ji is omnipresent in his creation. viShNu means all-pervading, the sustainer of the universe. maheSa, as the name suggests is mahAna ISvara (the great lord) or bhagavAna. It is said the maheSa (in rudra form) destroys the universe and pulls everything inside him. So in all three, the universe exists inside them, indicating the unity of them. They only appear as different for purpose of doing certain work.

vaiSnava-s would often substitute Siva for eSAna, Sambhu, rudra, mahadeva and maheSa.

Another point to understand here is that, Siva means auspiciousness, which is directly connected with brahman of upanishads (mANDukya upanishad). Also Siva is a pullinga

(masculine gender - word ending with vovel 'a'). Hence it denotes puruSa. Sivam is always napunsaka linga (neuter gender) and indicates nirgUNa brahman.

Nowhere in purANa-s the birth of Siva is described. Rest all are aspects of Siva. The word sadASiva also appears in Sri rudram.

puruSa is often translated as male or person. However, literal meaning is not to be always taken. puruSa also means the masculine form. We have heard of the words puruSa-prakruti. puruSa also means a creative principle, which is omnipresent and the controller of mAyA (mAyA-patI).

The word antaryAmi would mean, the one who resides inside every being (in hearts). antaryAmI not only covers living beings but also non-living being too.

sutrAtmA is another word used to explain the all-pervasiveness, connectivity and omnipresence of bhagavAn

Talking in language of laymen, there is a difference between the word bhagavAn and deva or devatA. While brahma, viShNu, Siva / rudra, gaNeSa, skanda, Adi Sakti, all come under the category of bhagavAn, Indra, agni and other deva-s come under the word deva and not bhagavAn. We do not say Indra bhagAvan. We always say Indra deva or agni deva. Only exception is sUrya deva, who is also called as sUrya bhagavAn. Here sUya is taken as parabrahman w.r.t. sAxI bhAva. sUrya is often called as sUrya nArAyaNa. It is also said that sUrya and agni are manifestations of Siva. sUrya is the only devatA who is physically visible with gross eyes.

nArAyaNa and the 'Na' (ण) factor

vaiSnava-s claim that the word nArAyaNa is a proper noun (personal noun). It means the one who is sitting or resting on waters, which is none other than viShNu. Hence nArAyaNa cannot be applied to anyone else then viShNu. Being a proper noun, it cannot be taken as adjective or common noun and hence it cannot be used for any other deity. Siva, rudra can be interpreted as common noun.

Lets understand the reason behind their claim.

nArAyaNa becomes proper noun because of the 'Na' (ण) in the end.

nArAyaNa is made up of two words, nAra + ayana.

नारायण = नार + अयन

nArAyaNa = nAra + ayana

Notice here that in the word 'ayana', 'na' is small 'na' (न) and not 'Na' (ण)

According to maharShi pAnini, when there are two words that combine to form a bigger word, then if the last syllable of the first half word with "ra" and the first syllable of the second word does not start with "ga", then the weak sounding "na" in the second word will transform into a stronger sounding "Na" . If this happens, this would mean only one person (that is a proper noun and not a common noun).

In our case, the last syllable of first word nAra (नार) is 'ra' (र)

first syllable of second word ayana (अयन) is 'a' (अ) and not 'ga' (ग)

When two words are joined, according to pAnini's grammar, it becomes nArAyaNa (नारायण) and not nArAyana (नारायन)

Each sanskrit word has many meanings and nArAyaNa is no exception. nArAyaNa means the one who gives shelter to nAra (jIva-s). This meaning is called as 'yougika' (यौगिक) meaning. It is a raw meaning of the word and does not point it to any particular identity. yougika meaning the meaning derived by joining two words (yOga).

There is another meaning called as rUDhi (रूढि) meaning. It means the obvious meaning.

When we say surpaNakhA. nakha means nail. surpaNakhA means the one which big nails (long nails). This is the yougika (यौगिक) meaning. But by saying surpaNakhA, we only and only mean rAvaNa's sister and not any other identity. In other words, whenever surpaNakhA is used, it 'obviously' means rAvaNa's sister surpaNakhA. this obvious meaning is called as rUDhi (रूढि) meaning.

In the sUrpaNakhA analogy sUrpaNakhA can mean 'anyone with long nails but the 'Na' indicates that Surpanakha is Ravana's sister'. But this is not valid if sUrpaNakhA is interpreted to mean something other than 'a person who has long nails'.

Similarly, nArAyaNa being a person (puruSa) and none other than viShNu is valid only if 'nArAyaNa' is interpreted as 'he who resides on the waters'.

But if Narayana is interpreted as 'That in which all things inhere' the above rule does not apply and one cannot say that nArAyaNa is none other than viShNu. Hence there is no contradiction. The problem does not arise. We can take Siva as nArAyaNa

Interestingly all three words mean the same.

According to the Uṇādi-sUtra i, 153, from verbal root √śī ("in whom all things lie"); perhaps connected with √śvi;

In simple words Siva means 'in whom all things lie'

viShNu is rooted in the word '√vis' which means 'all pervading' or 'to pervade'

nArAyaNa as we have seen also means ''That in which all things lie'

Hence it is not wrong to say Siva is nArAyaNa.

Now let us take the word 'puruSa' for analysis.

vaiSnava-s says that 'puruSa' is a person. We advaitins say it is nirAkAra (not nirguNa), omnipresent entity. mudgal upanishad explains the meaning of purusa sukta.

It says that 1000 eyes, or even 100 eyes has to be taken as infinite eyes. It simply means the one who is present everywhere. How can a person have infinite eye? It simply means that my eyes, your eyes, every body's eyes are HIS eyes. In other words, HE looks through our eye. In rAma gItA, verse 4, laxmaNa clearly says that the true nature of srI rAma is nirAkAra, but for bhakta-s he takes form.

So puruSa does not mean person. puruSa means omnipresent entity. puruSa is masculine tatva and prakruti (mAyA) is feminine.

vaishNava objections

vaishNava-s give some explanations to prove supremacy of viShNu. Though viShNu is supreme is unquestionable, Siva too is equally supreme and his supremacy is unquestioned. Problem comes when one takes supreme Godhead as a person. If we take nirAkAra (formless) entity as supreme and all forms are his manifestations, then the problem is solved. Except earth (prithvi tatva) all other tatva-s are formless and shapeless. Water can be freezed into a definite shape. In the same way ISvara can be both sAkAra nad nirAkAra. Other panch mahAbhuta-s like air and space are completely nirAkAra. Hence ISvara, who is subtle than all five is definitely nirAkAra. If tatva-s can stay in formless state, then why not the creator of universe? when water can exists as solid, liquid and gas, then why not ISvara exist as solid object, formless and invisible (steam)?

Lets move on to the objections raised by vaiSnava-s

Some objections raised by vaiSnava-s are:

1. rudra is born from semen of brahmA. brahmA donated semen to ushA, and after one year she gave birth to rudra. rudra cried upon birth and said that he is crying since he is sinful. So to purify him brahmA gives him all names. Some also point out verses from sruti which says that during the time of destruction, rudra was absent. It was viShNu who carried out the destruction.
2. From point (1), the birth of rudra is karma-vaSa and not of divine origin as that of rAma and kruShNa.
3. rudra is born of viShNu
4. nArAyaNa is antaryAmI of rudra and all glories of rudra / Siva belong to nArAyaNa / viShNu only.
5. nArAyaNa is proper noun and hence it is only applicable to supreme brahman. viShNu is the only nArAyaNa as per shruti-s
6. rudra was bewildered by mohini svarUpa of nArAyaNa
7. dakxiNAmurti svarUpa, the Adi gurU gives GYAna of viShNu only
8. Siva is paSu-pati, the lord of beast (creatures) or lower emotions or animal instincts
9. Siva cannot grant moxa
10. brahmA was confused and hence there are differences between them in terms of content. Due to brahmA being confused he must have written rAjasika and tAmasika purANA

Lets try to logically analyze their objections.

1. If we understand this verse cited from Satapat brAhmaNa, we have following conclusions.

a. rudra is jIva

The claim is that rudra / Siva was born and dies (absent) during destruction of the worlds, hence rudra is a 'jIva'. If we accept this theory, then we can say that jIva is 'born' and 'dies'. This would contradict the basic tenet of vaiShNava-s which says that 'jIva, jagat and ISvara are eternal'. This means that jIva is also eternal, but is dependent upon ISvara. Accepting this claim would do more harm then help.

b. brahmA's spiritual concert is ushA.

ushA is a vedic goddess of dawn as per rgveda (rigveda). She is often associated as consort of Sun (as she brings dawn). purANika character usha was also the daughter king bANAsura, who married to kruShNa's son. I am not aware of any verse in which sarasvatI is called as ushA. Also note that brahmA ji was not married while creating the universe. he created Shatrupa and was attracted towards her. Hence the literal meaning of the verse cannot be taken. matsya purANa says that once there was no creation and brahmA was alone. So enjoy company, brahmA split himself into two halves creating a feminine aspect, another being himself.

c. There is another objection.

purANa-s teach us that universe exists for a single day of brahmA. This day is equivalent to four billion earth years, at the end of which the whole universe gets dissolved. This process is called 'pralaya', which repeats for such 100 years, a period that represents Brahma's lifespan.

Now, if we take the meaning of brahmA creating rudra via semen and rudra was born 'normally' like mortals after one year. It simple means that that for one full year of brahmA, rudra was absent. Nowhere in purANa-s or in shruti-s we find that rudra was absent for many many kalpa-s which together form one year of brahma. Hence literal meaning should not be taken.

d. None of the purANa-s say that any jIva by the strength of his tapas can be awarded the position of Siva. One can attain the status of Indra on strength of his merit, but not the position of Siva. Siva / rudra is called as bhagavAn. bhagavAn cannot be jIva. This is simple logic. Trying to project Siva and jIva is nothing but EGO problem :)

Rig veda says, rudra is immortal

RV 1.114.1. To the strong Rudra bring we these our songs of praise, to him the Lord of Heroes with the braided hair, That it be well with all our cattle and our men, that in this village all he healthy and well−fed.

RV 1.43.3 By worship of the Gods may we, O Bounteous One, O Rudra, gain thy grace, Ruler of valiant men. Come to our families, bringing them bliss: may we, whose heroes are uninjured, bring thee sacred gifts,

RV 1.43.4 Hither we call for aid the wise, the wanderer, impetuous Rudra, perfecter of sacrifice. May he repel from us the anger of the Gods: verily we desire his favourable grace.

RV 1.43.5 Him with the braided hair we call with reverence down, the wild−boar of the

sky, the red, the dazzling shape. May he, his hand filled full of sovran medicines, grant us protection, shelter, and a home secure.

RV 1.43.6 Grant us, **Immortal One**, the food which mortals eat: be gracious unto me, my seed, my progeny.

RV 1.114.6 This praise, the sweetest of the sweet, and cause of increase (to the reciter), is addressed to Rudra,the father of the Maruts; **immortal Rudra** ,grant us food sufficient for mortals, and bestow happiness on me, my son, and my grandson.

2. Since literal meaning of verse should not be taken, hence the literal story also should not be taken. Apart from this, there is no mentioned karma for rudra to do to wipe out his sins. nArAyana is also said to be the son. The meaning of nArAyaNa means the indweller of nara (living beings). rg veda states only 33 original devatAs-. viShNu is also mentioned as one of Aditya-s i.e. son of Aditya (sun god). it is also said that nArAyAnA obtained omnipresence after performing vedic sacrifice for 5 days. All these stories should not be taken literally.

3. Each purANa-s describe one born of another. Now that since advaitins do not believe in the verse categorizing purANa-s into sAttvika, rAjasika and tAmasika, the whole world is open to us :) The birth is not birth in literal sense, but separate manifestation to carry out particular work. linga purANa says from linga, both viShNu an brahmA were born.

4. The word nArAyaNa is proper noun. But as explained earlier, it is not necessary that it applies only to a person or to viShNu. the word nArAyaNa meaning indweller is equally applicable to Siva, who is said to be paSupati. saSu does not mean beast or lower animal nature. paSu means jiva-s. So paSupati means lord of jIva. BhagavAn in gItA BG 18.61 says īśvaraḥ sarva-bhūtānāṁ hṛd-deśe 'rjuna tiṣṭhati. ISvara means the lord of all. ESAna and maheSa are another names of Siva / rudra. Hence the same logic of Siva / rudra being indweller of all jIva-s is applicable.

If we agree to this logic, then there cannot be two antaryAmI-s :) .We do not find them in shruti-s either. Hence both *must* be same.

5. As said, according to general rules of sanskrit grammar, let nArAyaNa be the proper noun and let nArAyaNa be the supreme brahman. It is not wrong to apply it to viShNu as we have shruti pramANa-s. But this name is not a monopoly of viShNu. it is equally applicable to Siva rudra too.

6. This is story from bhAgavat purANa. The moral of story is more important than the story itself. Even rAma experienced grief, sorrow and krUShNa bleeded many times. Once kruShNa's finger bleeded. Seeing this, his sister draupadI tore a part of her sArI (saree) and tied it to kruShNa's finger. Later when she was forcibly unclothed (vastraharaNa) by duSAShana, she recalls kruShNa for help. kriShNa, performs dual duty of bhagavAn and

brother. Krishna keeps extending her sArI until duSAShana tires and quits. We should understand the purpose behind such stories.

Similarly, it was for the destruction of demon Guhasura that harIhara was born out of Siva-mohinI, while still complying the boon that Guhasura could only be killed by the son of Siva-viShNu.

7. daxiNAmurtI svarUpa is a maun svarUpa and gives instructions in silence and not of personal god viShNu. daxiNAmurtI is the symbol of GYAna and an Adi gurU.

8. As explained the word paSu means jIva and not beast or lower animal instincts (though they word covers them too). Hence paSu-patI means lord of jIva-s another name of ISvara.

9. We find various examples of Siva granting moxa. One famous example which purANa-s tell is the importance of kASI,a holy place where bhagavAn Siva mutters tAraka mantra in ears of dying person. This tAraka mantra is not rAma nAma or mantra of bhagavAna rAma. It is OM, praNav, the first primordial sound, the only mantra that can directly transcend one beyond guNa-s and hence mAyA. Siva is often connected with OM.

We find reference from bhAgavat purANa itself in 8th skandha

Siva can grant moxa

BP 8.7.21: The ArAdhyadeva, the one who is the chosen deity of worship of deva-s, O mahadeva (God of Gods)! You are Atman and life giver of all.

BP 8.7.22: **You and only you are capable of giving bondage and freedom (moxa) to this world.** Hence wise worship only you because to the ones who have taken refuge in you, you are the remover of their sorrows and are jagadguru (world teacher).

Siva is para-brahma

BP 8.7.23 &

BP 8.7.24

says that Siva is brahman and takes form of brahmA, viShNu and maheSa. Siva is the Atman of all is jagadiSa and you are the source of veda-s.

BP 8.7.21-35 glorify Siva

BP 8.7.33 says, those who accuse you of being a samsAri as you live with mAtA pArvatI and that you are living in cremation ground and hence you are not auspicious, but are fierce [frightful] and cruel, insensitive, those fools are they capable of knowing the secret of your lIlA [why you behave in this way]? Their such assumptions are filled with shamelessness.

[under construction]

brahmA jI is not deluded by his own creation says bhagavAn viShNu in chatu-sloki bhAgavat

[Added on 14th March 2016]

Note: This article is continuation of previous article which is giving replies to 10 common objections raised by vaiShNava-s

10. According to this belief, brahmA jI got confused and so endowed with tamasa guNa he created tAmasika purANa-s. However we have a great discourse given by bhagavAn viShNu himself to brahmA jI before brahmA jI began to create the universe. This divine discourse is popularly known by the name chatusloki-bhAgavat. It contains just four verses BP 2.9.32-35 as the main part of updesha, however, verses from BP 2.9.30-36 are collectively called as chatusloki-bhAgavat. Verses BP 2.9.30-31 are the beginning of instruction by bhagavAn viShNu. From verse 2.9.32, upadesha starts. Verse 2.9.36 is the phala-shruti, where bhagavAn declares that if you [brahmA jI] stay focussed on the teachings that I have just now given and then begin the work of creation, then you will never get trapped into your own creation. The verse is:

एतन् मतं समातिष्ठ परमेण समाधिना ।
भवान् कल्पविकल्पेषु न विमुह्यति कर्हिचित् ।। २.९.३६ ।।

Hindi:
आप उत्कृष्ट समाधि द्वारा [अर्थात् ध्यानसे], मेरा यह सिद्धान्तमें अच्छी तरह से स्थित हो जाओ. (ईस्से),
[ईस ज्ञान मे स्थित रहनेके परिणाम से], कल्प-कल्पान्तरोमें भी कभीभी और कहीभी मोहित नहीं होंगे - २.९.३६

English:

BP 2.9.36: You (brahmA jI) [humbly and devoutly] stay steadily rooted in the most excellent samAdhI [i.e. by remaining fully focussed on the philosophy (teachings), not letting any other thought or doubt]. As a result [of remaining steadfast in communion with the knowledge that I gave you], you will never ever get trapped (attracted) [in the world you are creating] for kalpa-kalpAntara i.e. eternally.

In simple words, brahmA jI, you remaining steadfast in the knowledge I just now gave you, if you begin the work of creation, then you will never ever get trapped in your own creation.

Hence when you read about the ignorance of brahmA jI, it is just for the sake of creating a guru-shishya samvAda. To add to it, brahmA, viShNu and Siva (rudra, as destroyer) are three shakti-s (energies, powers) of brahman. Both these facts are explained in the most widely quoted purANa viShNu purANa.

brahmA jI is said to 'be born' only under pretence

We will first quote viShNu purANa that trinity of brahmA-viShNu-Siva are energies or powers of brahman.

VP 1.2.1-2: srI parASarajI said – **the one who is the cause of brahmA, viShNu (hari) {deity of preservation} and Sankara and assumes the forms** of brahmA, viShNu {deity of preservation} and Sankara for the creation, preservation and destruction of the world (or universe). And who helps his devotees to swim the ocean of samsAra i.e. transcend his devotees beyond samsAra (this transcient world), **that changeless, pure,** indestructible, paramAtmA, always one and uniform (ekarasa), completely victorious (sarvavijayI), my salutations to bhagavAn vAsudeva viShNu.

Simple translation of VP 1.2.3:

VP 1.2.3: Inspite of being one, appears as in many forms, is of the nature of gross-subtle, is unmanifested and is also manifest, and is the cause of liberation of his devotees, I bow to that bhagavAn viShNu.

VP 1.2.4: The one who is the root cause of the creation, preservation and destruction of this world, I bow to that viShNu paramAtmA.

VP 1.2.61 Established [in Self], the vishveshvara bhagavAn viShNu, by endowing itself[1] with rajoguNa, assumed the form of brahmA jI began the work of creation

[1] Here the word 'it' is used as brahman is nirguNa and nirAkAra i.e. it is neuter gender and not masculine gender.

VP 1.2.62 And after finishing the creation, by endowing itself with the most magnificent sattvaguNa, the great bhagavAn viShNu [as viShNu, the perserver] sustained the creation for many yuga-s *(yuga-yugAntara)* until the end of kalpa.

VP 1.2.63 O Maitrei (maitrai)! then, in the end of kalpa, by endowing itself with the painful tamoguNa, assumed the form of rudra that janArdana viShNu [different from perserver viShNu], destroys or engulfs everything.

VP 1.2.66 The same (one and only one) bhagavAn janArdana, assumes the form (upAdhi-s, sanGYA) of brahmA for creation, viShNu for perservation and Siva for destruction.

VP 1.2.67 [That] bhagavAn viShNu, by becoming [or acting or assuming the form of] creator [brahmA jI] creation itself, by assuming the form of viShNu sustains itself and by assuming the form of Siva destroys itself and itself [which is creation and jIva-s] merges into itself.

Now we will understand how brahmA jI is never deluded.

विष्णु पुराण – १.३.३-५

तन्निबोध यथा सर्गे भगवान्सम्प्रवर्त्तते ।

नारायणाख्यो भगवान्ब्रह्मा लोकपितामहः ॥ १.३.३ ॥

उत्पन्नः प्रोच्यते विद्वन्नित्यमेवोपचारतः ॥ १.३.४ ॥

(VP 1.3.4 has just one line)

VP 1.3.3-4 Now [please] listen how **nArAyaNa**, [who is] loka-pitAmAH (father of world), **bhagavAn** brahmA jI, gets engaged in the work of creation. O learned [maitreya] (Maitri)! **always by only pretence (upachAra), he is called as 'is born' (utpannaH)**.

निजेन तस्य मानेन आयुर्वर्षशतं स्मृतम् ।

तत्पराख्यं तदर्द्धं च परार्द्धमभिधीयते ॥ १.३.५ ॥

VP 1.3.5 **As a result of this [pretence] he is said to have age of 100 years.** This [duration of 100 years] is called as 'para' 'पर', and it's half [duration] is called as 'parArdha' 'परार्ध'.

Note: *An interesting question which may bother many is answered in viShNu purANa 1.3.1-2.*

श्री मैत्रेय उवाच

निर्गुणस्याप्रमेयस्य शुद्धस्याप्यमलात्मनः ।

कथं सर्गादिकर्तृत्वं ब्रह्मणो ऽभ्युपगम्यते ॥ १.३.१ ॥

VP 1.3.1 shrI maitrai said - O bhagavan! That brahman, which is nirguNa (attributeless), apramaiya (immesurable), shuddha (pure) and nirmalAtmA (stainless, untouched by three guNa-s of mAyA), how can it be said that it is the creator of sarga, etc work.

In other words, how can attributeless, immesurable, pure, untainted by mAyA, can actually act and get itself engaged in the work of creation?

Since the answer is important, and the author finds it difficult to translate aptly, both Hindi and English translations are provided

श्री पराशर उवाच
शक्तयः सर्वभावानामचिन्त्यज्ञानगोचराः ।
यतो ऽतो ब्रह्मणस्तास्तु सर्गाद्या भावशक्तयः ।
भवन्ति तपतां श्रेष्ठ पावकस्य यथोष्णता ॥ १.३.२ ॥

VP 1.3.2 श्री पराशजी बोले - हे तपस्वियोंमें श्रेष्ठ मैत्रेय ! समस्त भाव-पदार्थोंकी शक्तियाँ अचिन्त्य-ज्ञानकी विषय होती हैं; [उनमें कोई उक्ति काम नहीं देती] अतः अग्निकी शक्ति उष्णताके समान ब्रह्मकी भी सर्गादि-रचनारुप शक्तियाँ स्वाभाविक हैं।

VP 1.3.2 shrI parAshara jI said - O the best amongst tapasvi-s (ascetics) maitreya (Maitri)!, though one cannot directly explain how the creation takes place, one can infer i.e. know through eye of wisdom that which is normally beyond perception. Just like fire doe snot do anything special to burn that is in it's vicinity, but objects burn due to the heat of fire, similarly, Brahman, does not do anything to create, but since is sattA i.e. consciousness itself), in it's presence, creation takes place own it's own.

The power (shakti, शक्ति) behind all being-substances / manifested-substances (bhAva-padArtha, भाव-पदार्थ) [1] is the object (viShaya, विषय) of uncontemplatable knowledge (achintya-GYAna अचिन्त्य-ज्ञान).

[1] bhAva, भाव means 'to have existance' or 'to exist' or 'existence' or 'object' or 'material object'.

[Under construction]

Further explanation (as explained by Sri K. Sadananda ji):

श्री मैत्रेय उवाच
निर्गुणस्याप्रमेयस्य शुद्धस्याप्यमलात्मनः ।
कथं सर्गादिकर्तृत्वं ब्रह्मणो ऽभ्युपगम्यते ॥ १.३.१ ॥

Shree Maitreya said:
Nirgunasya aprmeyasya suddhasya api amalaatmanaH|
Katham sargaadi kartRitam brahmanaH abhyugamyaH – iti||

Shree Maitreya asked.

Brahman who is one without any attributes, one who cannot be an object of knowledge (aprameyam) or which cannot be known, suddhasya api – even though pure or without any superimpositions, and amaalaatmanaH – uncontaminated by the creation or unaffected by the creation that is not becoming a creator (role) – how can there be sargaadi kartRitvam- talking the role of a creator or agency of creation – possible?

श्री पराशर उवाच

शक्तयः सर्वभावानामचिन्त्यज्ञानगोचराः

यतो ऽतो ब्रह्मणस्तास्तु सर्गाद्या भावशक्तयः ।

भवन्ति तपतां श्रेष्ठ पावकस्य यथोष्णता ।। १.३.२ ।।

We will split this verse into two parts for better understanding:

श्री पराशर उवाच

शक्तयः सर्वभावानामचिन्त्यज्ञानगोचराः

ShrI parAshara answered:

ShaktaYaH – He (nirguNa Brahman) is capable or it is possible – since maaya is aghaTita ghaTanaa paTeeyasi – that which makes impossible possible – sarva bhaavanaam achintya gyaana gocharaaH – One cannot directly explain how the creation takes place– but can be known or seen by the wisdom eye – One has to understand via jnaana that there is really no creation that can be seen since it is achintyam –beyond the analysis of the mind – since the seeker is asking an intellectual explanation. From Brahman reverence there is really no creation or creation also cannot be possible or he does not take the role of a creator. He explains this by example below - The apparent creation is possible by its mere presence. How - sloka below give an example.

श्री पराशर उवाच

यतो ऽतो ब्रह्मणस्तास्तु सर्गाद्या भावशक्तयः ।

भवन्ति तपतां श्रेष्ठ पावकस्य यथोष्णता ।। १.३.२ ।।

yathaH – athaH –bramaNasta astu sargaadyaa bhaavashaktayaH|
bhavanti tapataam shreshTaH paavaksya yathoSNataa|

Hai ShreshTaH – addressing Matreya – Hai noble one.

Here he is giving some example –*yathaa bhavanti paavaksya ushnatA tapatAm*– One can get burned by the heat of the fire. Fire in the heat is just its natural property - – Fire does not really burn anything nor it gets by its own fire– but in its presence things get burned. You cannot accuse the fire why are you burning things. It would say – I have nothing to do with any burning. I am naturally present and things in my presence get burned. – In the same way creation happens in its mere presence.

athaH – therefore – brahmmanathaH – in the presence of the Brahman, sargaadyaaH bhAvashaktayaH astu – The creation etc – creation, sustenance and annihilation etc. happens

mahAbhArata also says brahmA jI is unborn

In anushAshnika parva, bhiShma narrates superiority of brahmaNa-s (Brahmins) as compared to kshatriya-s. The reason for their supremacy is the powers acquired by tapas. With the help of which a rishi, who is a brahmANa could gulp entire ocean. The discourse is a flash back of discourse between the varuNa deva and kartavIrya arjuNa. Here, while explaining the theory of creation, varNAdeva explained that brahmA jI is in reality unborn. (brahmA jI is also referred to as a first brahmANa and the first one to chant four veda-s from his four heads.)

तथा **प्रजापतिर्ब्रह्मा अव्यक्तः प्रभुरव्ययः**।

येनेदं निखिलं विश्वं जनितं स्थावरं चरम्॥ 13-153-15

अण्डजातं तु ब्रह्माणं केचिदिच्छन्त्यपण्डिताः।

अण्डाद्भिन्नाद्बभुः शैला दिशोऽम्भः पृथिवी दिवम्॥ 13-153-16

द्रष्टव्यं नैतदेवं हि कथं जायेदजो हि सः।

स्मृतमाकाशमण्डं तु तस्माज्जातः पितामहः॥ 13-153-17

The Lord of all creatures, brahmA, unmanifest, endued with pursuance, and of unfading glory, who created this boundless universe with its mobile and immobile creatures (is a brAhmaNa, Brahmin). Some persons there are, destitute of wisdom, who say that brahmA was born of an Egg. From the original Egg, when it burst forth, mountains and the points of the compass and the waters and the earth and the heavens all sprang forth into existence. This birth of the creation was not seen by any one. How then can brahmA be said to have taken his birth from the original Egg, when especially he is declared as Unborn? It is said that vast uncreate Space is the original Egg. It was from this uncreate Space (or Supreme Brahman) that the Grandsire (brahmA) was born.

Credits: Shri Santosh ji and sacredtexts.com

Here, the epithats like Lord of all creatures, unfading glory, etc are mentioned. They are explained in kurma purANa. Since we are in process of refuting that tAmasika purANa-s (like kurma purANa) lead one to hell, tAmasika purANa-s like skanda purANa are also quoted by madhvAchArya jI. They are accepted even by vaiShNava-s when they do not contradict sAttcika purANa. When any purANa sheds more light on topic, we must take it's help, specially when it does not contradict mahAbhArata and of course mahAbhArata.

kurma purANa says brahmA is unborn

KP 1.4.59 He (brahmA) is called as Adideva since he was the first deva to be known to exist. He is called as 'aja' since he (brahmA jI) is ajanmA. Through him all beings are protected, hence he is called as prajApati

KP 1.4.60 As he (brahmA) is great (mahAn) amongst all deva-s, hence he is called as mahAdeva. Since he is brihad (big, vast) than anyone else, he is called as brahmA and since he is beyond everything (beings and creation), he (brahmA) is called as parameshvara.

KP 1.4.61 He (brahmA jI) is calleda s 'Ishvara' because he has the qualities of 'controlling everything' and 'not being controlled by anyone'. He (brahma jI) is called as 'riShi' since he roams everywhere and he (brahmA jI) is called as 'hari' since he 'removes everything' [i.e. removes all kinds of sorrows and fear]

KP 1.4.62 He is called as 'svayambhU' (Self Born) since he is 'ajanmA' (unborn). Similarly he (brahmA jI) is called as 'nArAyaNA' since he is 'supporter' or 'refuge' of all nara-s (jIva-s, souls)

bhagavAn kurma clears confusion of brahmA being born and yet is considered as unborn

KP 1.9.4-29 gives reason why brahmA instead of being born from navel, is unborn.

(To save time, abridged version adapted from astrojyoti.com website. This version is not verse-to-verse translation. The translation may sometimes not retain the bhAva or may make it sound that Gods are arrogant, but neverthless, it solves our prupose here.)

The gods and the sages told Vishnu, "We are getting a bit confused. You have told us that Brahma emerged from Vishnu's body And yet you have also told us how Brahma was born inside a golden egg. Which of these is the correct account? Then again, you have told us that Shiva was born from one of Brahma's tears. But we have sometimes heard otherwise. Which is right? Please remove this confusion."

"There is no confusion," replied Vishnu. "Let me explain it for you."

Brahma was born from the golden egg right at the beginning, at the time of the original creation. But at the end of every kalpa there is a minor destruction when all living beings other than Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva die. When the destruction is over, creation has to start afresh.

(after few verses) bhagavAn kurma continues,

While Vishnu thus slept on the water, a wonderful lotus sprouted from his navel. the lotus was gigantic and shone like the sun. Its fragrance spread in all directions. Brahma appeared inside the lotus. Since padma means lotus and yoni means place of Birth, Brahma is also known as Padmayoni.

Brahma saw Vishnu sleeping on the water and woke him up. "Who are you?" asked Brahma.

"I am Vishnu." replied Vishnu. "I am the origin of everything. That will be there in the universe is inside my body."

"Is that really so?" asked Vishnu. "Let me see."

Vishnu thereupon entered Brahma's body. He really found the three worlds, the gods, the demons and the humans inside Brahma's stomach and was greatly surprise. He emerged from Brahma's mouth and told Brahma, "What I have seen inside your body is truly wonderful. But I too can show you many worlds inside my body. Please enter and see for yourself."

It was now Brahma's turn to enter Vishnu's body. But when Brahma did this, he could find no end to Vishnu's stomach. It was true that there were many worlds inside Vishnu's body. However, Brahma could find no way of coming out from Vishnu's stomach. He finally jab to emerge through Vishnu's navel, through the stalk of the lotus that was there.

"How dare you try to confine me inside your body?" demanded Brahma, as soon as he managed to get out.

"Please do not get angry." replied Vishnu. "I merely thought that I would play with you for a while. Otherwise, it is inconceivable that anyone should dare to confine the great Brahma. Please pardon me. And as a token of your pardon, please grant me the boon that henceforth, you will be known as my son. After all, you did emerge from a lotus that grew out of my navel."

"Agreed." said Brahma. "Let us make peace. After all; there is no one else. We are the lords of everything, we are parts of the brahman."

[under construction]

For a moment, even if we consider that brahmA jI was actually 'born' form caturbhuja viShNu (sagua viShNu), still, for God's sake, let us stay in our limits and do not criticize Lord brahmA, one among trinity. We have no right to question him, mistrust brahmA ji to give us faulty purANa-s that are misleading. mAdva-s consider brahmA ji as one of the great bhAgavat who is always devoted to Sri hari. let us not question the decision of Sri hari to give certain task to brahma ji. Questioning brahmA ji is to question Sri hari himself.

Again, purANa-s were penned down by none other than an avatar of Sri hari, bhagavAn veda vyAsa. Hence even by the logic that viShNu is endowned with sattva guNA (pure mode of goodness), and is pure and hence cannot make mistakes, bhagavAn veda vyAsa also cannot make any mistake while splitting already existing purANa-s or even while composing new ones.

Arguing that Siva can only give material benefits is also questioning Sri hari. Siva is said to be the granter of moksha and grant immortality. Please stop denigrating and weighing Gods with our pity low level intellect. Let us remain in our limits. we are all human. Whosoever has raised such doubts have directly or indirectly questioned Sriman nArAyaNa only.

Moral of story is more important than story and adopting nAhI nindA nyAya

Moral of the story is more important than the story itself. I am not aware of any story in any purana, be it tamasic purana, in which finally adharma wins over dharma.

There is no purANa in which adharma finally wins of dharma. If we keep interpreting stories in literal meaning and keep fighting over supremacy of our chosen deity, there will be nothing but chaos in our mind, and we will have to even reject that bhagavAna has given - veda-s, purANa-s and other shastra-s. bhagavAna veda vyAsa is an avatar of viShNu says bhagavad purANa. The lord who is above gUNa-s cannot be confused amongst various kalpa-s, cannot loose memory, cannot mislead people. ISvara does not have negative emotions, just pure love. It is a great sin to think about about such a thing about ISvara. Even brahmA which is said to be born of either viShNu or Siva is not an ordinary soul. He is one of trinity and if he makes mistakes, then the whole creation would be a mess.

The post of Siva is not given to anyone. No purANa-s talk about a pious soul been given the post of Siva. Siva is the one who grants moksha. The stories of the great kASi nagrI (sity) are well known. Siva grants moksha by giving tAraka mantra. This tAraka mantra is not rAma nAma, but OM. Om, praNava, is the first primordial sound, often contemplated to be one with nirguNa brahman. OM is also connected with Siva.

Infact there is no such clear and direct reference in purANa-s which connects moksha (parama pada) with Siva. Though Siva means auspiciousness, all names of ISvara have their own meaning. Our shastra-s can be interpreted in both literal and symbolic / metaphoric way.

Differences between various purANa-s should not lead to confusion. kAnchi paramAcArya asks us to adopt nAhI nindA nyAya. Also please refer to Contradictory stories in Puranas 'same moral of the story'

According to Padma Purana, there was just one purana, which was split by Bhagavan Veda Vyasa. It is well known and accepted by all that veda vyAsa has split veda in four. If we apply the logic of categorization of purANa-s, it would mean that the veda-s also contains misleading information, which is absolutely not acceptable.

Literal meaning should not be taken

If we read a verse from bhAgavat purANa (1.1.2), which says that only bhagavat is enough, then it means there is no meaning of reading any shruti or smriti. Why would acharya-s write commentaries on prasthantraiyi. The words are not to be taken literally. It is just glorification or a praise of Bhagavat Purana.

SB 1.1.2: Completely rejecting all religious activities which are materially motivated, this Bhāgavata Purāṇa propounds the highest truth, which is understandable by those devotees who are fully pure in heart. The highest truth is reality distinguished from illusion for the welfare of all. Such truth uproots the threefold miseries. ***This beautiful Bhāgavatam, compiled by the great sage Vyāsadeva [in his maturity], is sufficient in itself for God realization. What is the need of any other scripture?*** *As soon as one attentively and submissively hears the message of Bhāgavatam, by this culture of knowledge the Supreme Lord is established within his heart.*

Considering above points and claims about padma purana being corrupted or interpolated or extrapolated, if at all something needs to be discarded on basis of dubious authority, then it has to be few verses of classification, which are the basis of rejecting parts of shruti-s, smriti-s, veda-s, purANa-s or even the whole Tamasic purANa-s.

To add to it, a detailed analysis of Shankara Bhashya of Vishnu Sahasranama is done. There are references of as many as 12 PurANa-s.

No purANa is superior or inferior

It is well known that all purAna-s are authored by one person, Bhagavan Veda Vyas, who is an avatar of Lord Vishnu according to Srimad Bhagavatam. Atleast 18 mahApurANa-s are authored by Bhagavan Veda Vyas. Each PurANa is dedicated to and glorifies one deity. How is it possible that one deity is superior than other. What is the purpose behind glorifying all deities. If at all Krishna / Vishnu has to be glorified and to be declared as

supreme Godhead, then why create purANa-s which glorify other deities like Shiva, Brahma, Skanda and Ganesh?

So accepting one purANa and rejecting another or condemning other is a direct insult to it's creator Bhagavan Veda Vyas.

Some say that Padma Purana categories all purANa-s in sattvik, rajasic, tamasic categories. If tamas guna is inferior and so you ignore or reject that purANa, then your own physical body is also made of Tamas Guna.

Logically tamas has to be first removed. Hence Shiva purANa and other purANa-s categorized in tamas category must be studied. Even Bhagavatam glorifies Lord Shiva as Creator, preserver and destroyer of universe. This happens when devatA-s and Lord Brahma attempt to calm down angry Lord Shiva when he hears his spiritual consort Maa Parvati sacrificed herself in fire of yagna. This yagna kund is still present and people still pay it's respect to it. The temple is called दक्षेश्वर महादेव मन्दिर (Daksha-Mahadev Temple or Daksheswara Mahadev Temple). With passage of time, the size of kund got reduced i.e. havan kund shrunk from it's original size to it's present size. This incident happens in the beginning of Srimad Bhagavatam.

It is clear that Bhagavan Veda Vyas wrote 18 purANa-s to unify all Hindus, but ignorant, non-tolerant people and extremists still fight over deva supremacy.

I use the word extremists because Paramacharya also uses this word in his book Hindu Dharma

> Do Saivas and Vaisnavas worship the same god? No. However it be with ordinary Vaisnavas, their acaryas or teachers never go anywhere near a Siva temple. Their god is Visnu, never Siva. In the opinion of the worshippers of Visnu, Siva is also one of his (Visnu's) devotees. There are extremists among Saivas also according to whom Visnu is not a god but a devotee of Siva. How then can the two groups be said to belong to the same religion?

Source: Hindu Dharma, Part 4, Chapter 4, Vedas - Root of all.

It is Advaita which recognizes this unity and supports that all forms of Bhagavan are manifestations of NirguNa Brahman and hence are all equal in all respects.

It is known that Srimad Bhagavatam is the last of the 18 purANa-s. It was the last purANa written. Logically, this means that technically the categorization of various purANA-s should occur only in the last purANa. How can one categorize that which is non-existent? When Srimad Bhagavatam was not created, how can it be categorized. Logically this means that this part is interpolated. We can only accept this categorization as authentic on msytical basis. Since our seers are knowers of past, present and future, hence they know what would happen in past and which purANa is to be written. An example to the support of this view is Bhavishya Mahapurana.

All acharya-s admit about some interpolation or corruption here and there, but not the whole of purANa is corrupted. Hence we must respect all purANA-s and hence consider all devata-s mentioned in 18 purANa-s as equal and same manifestation of the same divinity or in other words, manifestation of NirguNa Brahman.

In Padma purANa, 88th chapter called shrikrushna satyabhama sanvada adhyaya describes the conversation between Shri Krishna and his wife Satyabhama. there shri krishna says:

शैवा: सौराच्श्रगणेशावैष्णवा:शक्तिपूजका:

मामेवप्राप्नुवंतीहवर्षाभसागरंयथा ।। 43

Like the rain water comes from all around and finally reaches the ocean, similarly all those worshipping Shiva, Ganesh, Shakti, all finally reach me. It is me who is seen different due to my leela.

Further in Padma Purana we find,

यो ब्रहमा स हरि: प्रोक्तो यो हरि स महेश्वर: या काली,सैव कृष्ण....कालिका
Yo Brahma sah hari Prokto yo hari sah maheshwarah Ya kali saiv Krishna....

The one who is Brahmaa, that is Hari and the one who is Hari, he himself is Shiva. The one who is Kali, the same is Krishna and the one who is Krishna is kali. Those who differentiate between forms of God, can not understand me well.

त्रयी सांख्यं योग पशुपतिमतं वैष्णवमिति प्रभिन्ने प्रस्थाने परमिदमद पथ्यमिति च रूचिनां
वैचित्र्याद्यृजुकुटिलनानापथजुषां नृणामेको गम्यस्त्वमसि पयसामर्णव इव

trayi sankhyam yogah pasupati matam vaishnavamiti prabhinne prasthane
paramidamadah pathyamiti ca, rucinam vaicitryad riju kutila nana pathajusham
nrinameko gamyas tvamsasi payasa marnava iva.

Different paths (to realization) arc enjoined by the three Vedas, by Sankhya, Yoga, Pashupata (Shaiva) (doctrine and Vaishnava Shastras. People follow different paths, straight or crooked, according to their temperament, depending on which they consider best, or most appropriate--and reach You alone just as rivers enter the ocean.

We find similar verses in Upanishads

He (Brahman) is Brahmaa, he is Siva, he is Indra, He is the imperishable, the supreme majesty, the self-effulgent; He is Vishnu, he is prana, He is time, He is fire, He is the moon. - Kaivalya Upanishad 8

The gods are united in Brahman or Iswara, i.e. they are non-different from Brahman or krishna or Iswara - Svetasvatara Upanishad IV.17

If Vaishnava-s say the Shiva is demi-god and not Ishvara, then it is completely wrong as there are many hyms dedicated to Lord Shiva / Lord Rudra in veda-s which is the final authority

Lord Shiva appears as Rudra in the Vedas and is glorified in many texts of the Vedas. One of the most powerful of the Veda Mantras appear in Rigveda 7:59:12. It is known as the Mahamrityunjaya Mantram. It also appears in Sukla Yajur Veda (3.60) and Krishna Yajur Veda (Taittiriya Samhita) 1.8.6.i.

'Tryambakam Yamaha sugandhim pusti vardhanam
Urvarukamiva bandhanan mrtyormoukshiya ma'amrtat.'

'We worship and adore you, O three-eyed one, You are sweet gladness, the fragrance of life, who nourishes us, restores our health, and causes us to thrive. As, in due time, the stem of the cucumber weakens and the gourd is freed from the vine, similarly free us from attachment and death, and do not withhold immortality.'

upa-purANa-s and sthala purANa-s are authentic too - in words of kAnchi paramAcArya

Paramacharya in his book 'Hindu Dharma', Part 11, Chapters 5 (Vyasa's Priceless Gift to Us) and chapter 6 (Upa-puranas and others) says in page 448, 449 that

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Apart from 18 Major PuraNas there are an equal no of Upa-puranas. Among them
are the Vinayaka Purana and the Kalki Purana. There are also, in addition,
a number of minor Puranas. The Puranas that speak of the glory of various
months such as the Tula Purana, the Magha Purana and the Vaisakha Purana are
parts included into the 18 major Puranas or Upa-puranas. There are also what
are called Sthala Puranas, some of them part of the Puranas mentioned above
and some existing independently. The puranas that sing the glory of the
Kaveri and the Ganga exist both separately and as part of the major Puranas
or of the Upa-puranas. In the Tula Purana, for instance, the importance of
the Kaveri is the theme. It mention how auspicious it is to bathe in that
river in the month of Tula (October-November).


If there are Puranas devoted to the deities there are also those dealing
with devotees. The Tamil Periyapuranam tells the story of the 63 Saiva saints
called Nayanmars. The same is available in the Sanskrit as Upamanyu
Bhaktavilasa. Bhakta-Vijaya deals with poet-saints like Tukaram and Namadeva
who were specially devoted to the deity Panduranga of Pandharpur.
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Online Source

If upa-purANA-s were un-authentic and recent creation, Paramacharya would not have mentioned them, though he does admit that there may be interpolations here and there

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Admittedly, there must be interpolations here and there in the Puranas but
it is not correct to say that the Puranas were all recently written.
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Online Source

It is needless to say that PurANa-s are authentic. Please refer to chapter 'Magnifying Glass of the Vedas' (Tip: To view Index, Click 'Hindu Dharma' on left Vertical Menu.)

Offline Source: Book, 'Hindu Dharma', Part 14, Chapter 1, Page, 433

To add to the above, Paramacharya in above book also deals in the Sthala Puranas, talks about their importance and considers them authentic. All puranas and upa-puranas, shala puranas, kula puranas are authentic.

Personal Note:

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Though Online version is good for searching Better have a hard copy of such
a Gem.
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Book Title     : Hindu Dharma - The Universal Way Of Life
Published by   : Bhartiya Vidya Bhavan (Bhavan's Book University)
Type           : Hard Bound
Pages          : 828
Language       : English
Cost(in India): Rs. 700.00 i.e. Rupees Seven Hundred Only
Edition        : 2008
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APPENDIX

References and Sources

SOURCES FOR READING

This page will always be updated as and when I find quality links related to Advaita Vedanta.

Advaita Vedanta links

Advaita Vedanta

Madhusudan Saraswati

Madhusudan Saraswati's Advaita Siddhi, Pdf on Archive.org, Scribd

Advaita Vedanta - FAQ

GauDpAdAcharya

Ajaati VAda

Vedic Sayings, Vedic Sayings 2, Vedic Sayings 3

Sri Ramana Maharshi's 40 Verses on Reality / Truth

Vedabase of Srila Prabhupada

Advaita Vedanta Philosophy - Shringeri Matt - New

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Avadhoot Gita - New

Atmabodh Bhasya - New

Srimad Bhagavat - A Vedantic View

http://www.krishnamurthys.com/profvk/VK2/Bhagavatam_Introduction.html

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http://sanskritdocuments.org/sites/snsastri/episodes.html

Bhagavad Gita Super Site Beta **- Excellent Site**

Seven Stages of Jnana - Swami Sivananda

What is Advaita Vedanta? How can it be applied in today's practical life?

Sri Ramakrishna on Meditation on God with and without Form

http://www.hindunet.org/alt_hindu/1995_Jan/msg00017.html

http://advaita-academy.org/Talks/The-Scriptural-teaching-of-mAyAvAda-and-brahmavAda-%283-of-3%29.ashx

http://www.jnanajyoti.com/article/article.php?id=261

Yog Vasistha

http://www.bhagwanvalmiki.com/yogvasistha1.htm

http://www.dlshq.org/religions/yogavasishtha.htm

Panchadasi of Vidyaranya

[To be added]

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The authors are not an authority in Spirituality but are sAdhaka-s (seekers of truth). This work is an attempt to collect information related to Advaita Vedanta in one place. Quotes used in this work are taken from information available on internet in public domain mostly by third party or from books written by saints following advaita vedAnta. The intention to use their work is not to make any commercial benefit, but to present Advaita Vedanta positively. Though care is been taken to give correct information, authors are not responsible for any misinformation given in this work, which is unintentional. However, pointing out mistakes and giving corrections are welcome.

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Updated on 03-Apr-2022

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Current site is built on the Google Sites platform. Earlier sites was built on Google Classic Sites platform. After Google Discontinued Classic Sites, all content was shifted to the new platform with new look on 20-Aug-2021. For more details, please visit Notice Page

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All that is useful is my guru's grace, all errors are mine.

Pranam-s
Hari OM

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अहं ब्रह्मास्मि

तत्वमसि

अयमात्मा ब्रह्म

सर्वं खल्विदं ब्रह्म

नेह नानाऽस्ति किं चन

ब्रह्म सत्यं जगन्मिथ्या

Om Shri Ganeshaya Namah || Om Shri Guru Sharanam || Om Shri Ramakrishna Sharanam || Om Shri Ramana Maharshi Sharanam || Om Shri Adi Shankara Sharanam || Om Shri Paramatmane Namah

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